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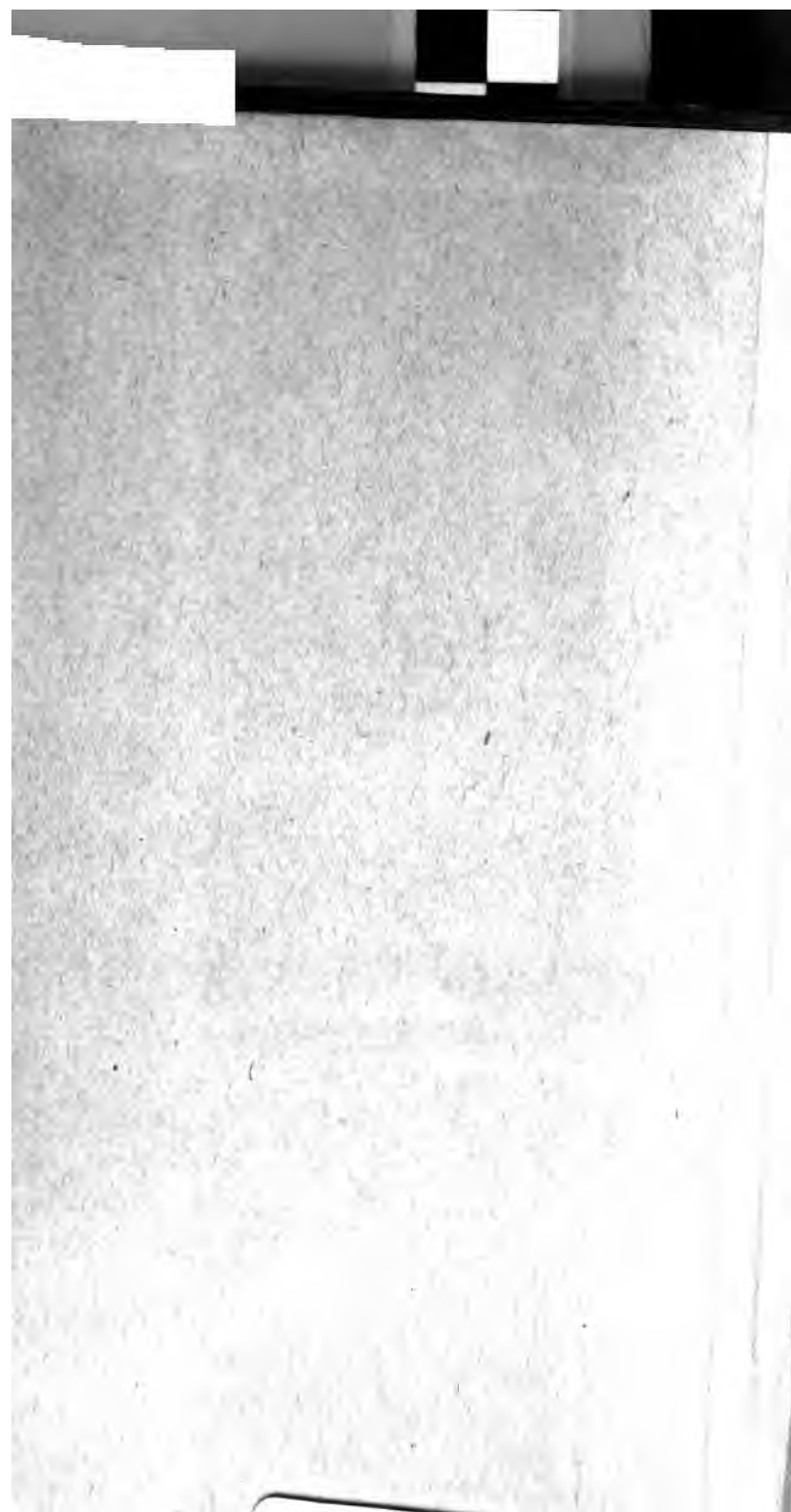
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**ELEMENTS**

OF

**INTELLECTUAL PHILOSOPHY,**

**DESIGNED AS A TEXT-BOOK,**

**BY THOMAS C. UPHAM,**

**PROFESSOR OF MORAL AND INTELLECTUAL PHILOSOPHY AND  
INSTRUCTOR OF HEBREW IN BOWDOIN COLLEGE.**

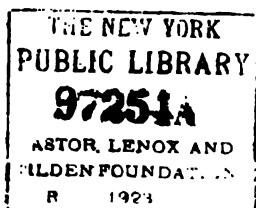
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**1878.**



DISTRICT OF MAINE, ss.

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on this 20th day of January, A.D. 1827, in the fifty first year of the Independence of the United States of America, *Mr Thomas C. Upham*, of the District of Maine, has deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as proprietor, in the words following, viz.

*"Elements of Intellectual Philosophy; designed as a Text-Book. Portland, published by William Hyde. Joseph Griffin, printer, Brunswick, 1827."*

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, "An act for the encouragement of learning by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned;" and also to an act, entitled "An act, supplementary to an act, entitled, an act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts and books to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned; and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical, and other prints."

JOHN MUSSEY, Jan. Clerk of the District Court of Maine.

## PREFACE.

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THE present work has been prepared in the hope of promoting a more general acquaintance with an important department of science. As it is designed chiefly for those, who are young and are in a course of education, it lays claims to no other merit, than what might ordinarily be expected in a text-book, founded on the inquiries of many valuable writers. Guided by their researches, it endeavours to give a condensed, but impartial view of Intellectual Philosophy, so far as its principles are understood at the present time; and the writer has learnt from a number of esteemed instructors of youth, that his design is approved by them. He is by no means insensible to this favourable sentiment; and if the present work should prove to be the means of awakening an increased interest in mental science, as its reception hitherto seems to promise, he will feel himself amply rewarded for whatever trouble its preparation may have occasioned.

Intellectual Philosophy has grown up, like other sciences, from small beginnings. Many propositions, coming too in many instances from able writers, have been thrown aside; truth has been sifted out from the mass of error, until at last a great number of important principles is ascertained. But while it is exceedingly necessary, that our youth should be made acquainted with these principles, it is impossible, that they should go through with all the complicated discussions, which have been held in respect to them. Many of the books, in which these discussions are contained, have become exceedingly rare; and if they were not so, no small number of students, who are now in the course of as thorough an education as our country affords, would not be able to purchase them. And besides, by placing before the student a mass of crude and conflicting statements, his mind becomes perplexed. To be able to resolve such a mass into its elements, and to separate truth from error, implies an acquaintance with the laws of the intellect, and a degree of mental discipline, which he is not yet supposed to have acquired; and hence instead of obtaining much important knowledge, he becomes distrustful of every thing.

Now these evils, saying nothing of the loss of time attendant on such a course, are to be remedied in the same way as in other sciences.

In other departments of learning ingenious men discuss points of difficulty ; conflicting arguments are accumulated, until the preponderance on one side is such, that the question in debate is considered settled. Others employ themselves in collecting facts, in classifying them, and in deducing general principles. And when all this is done, the important truths of the science, collected from such a variety of sources, and suitably arranged and expressed, are laid before the student, in order that he may become acquainted with them. Very seldom any one thinks it advisable, that the pupil, in the course of an education limited to a very few years, should be obliged to attempt an acquaintance with every scientific tract and book, whether of greater or less value. It is neither desirable nor possible, that he should be made to consult all the Memoirs of Institutes and of Royal Societies ; and still less to read the multitudes of half-formed suggestions, which are either struck out in the momentary heat of debate, or are developed from all quarters in the natural progress of the mind. It belongs rather to professional men and to public instructors, to engage in this minute and laborious examination, and to present those, whom they instruct, with the results of their inquiries. It may indeed be desirable to give them some knowledge of the history of a science, and to point out such authors as are particularly worthy of being consulted by those, whose inclination and opportunities justify more particular investigations. But this is all, that is either demanded, or can be profitable in the ordinary course of education. And this is what is attempted to be done in the present work.

It has been my desire and endeavour, as was intimated at the beginning of these remarks, to give a concise, but correct view of the prominent principles in Intellectual Philosophy, so far as they seemed at present to be settled. The statement of these principles is attended with a conspicuous summary of the facts and arguments, on which they are based ; together with occasional remarks on the objections, which have been made from time to time. In selecting facts in confirmation of the principles laid down, I have sought those, which not only had relation to the point in hand, but which promised a degree of interest for young minds. Simplicity and uniformity of style have been aimed at, although in a few instances the statements of the writers referred to have been admitted with only slight variations, when it was thought they had been peculiarly happy in them.

**THOMAS C. UPHAM.**

BOWDOIN COLLEGE, (MAINE,) MAY, 1828.

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## CHAPTER FIRST.

### UTILITY OF INTELLECTUAL PHILOSOPHY.

#### §. 1. Of the prejudice existing against this science.

**M**AN is not a simple, but a combined or complex existence, made up of intellect and matter. It belongs to Intellectual Philosophy to make inquiries into his intellectual part, into that characteristic element in his formation, which thinks, feels, wills, and combines. A prejudice has existed in respect to the inquiries, belonging to this department of science. It has been often entered upon in our literary institutions with reluctance, and relinquished without regret. This aversion is not limited to the idle, but not unfrequently includes those, who know the value of time and the importance of mental improvement.—The objections against the Philosophy of the Mind, which have in a great measure given rise to this prejudice, may be principally summed up in two particulars.

#### §. 2. Of the metaphysics of the schools.

Of these, one is the frivolous character of the metaphysical writings of the schools.

The origin of those institutions, to which the name of schools is given, was this. By order of a general Council of the Roman Catholic Church, held at Rome in the year 1179, certain persons were appointed to give instructions



either in the cathedrals and monasteries, or in some suitable buildings erected near them. The places of instruction were called by the Latin name *SCHOLÆ*; the teachers were termed *SCHOLASTICI*. These minor institutions, some of which had an existence previous to the enactment of the canons of the Council, which has been mentioned, at length grew up into the more imposing shape of seminaries, answering to the public literary institutions of modern times. But while there was an alteration in the institutions themselves, and colleges and universities in the end arose from these small beginnings, the same appellations continued.

By the *SCHOOLS*, then, are to be understood the European literary and theological institutions, as they were constituted and regulated from about the middle of the twelfth century to the period of the Protestant reformation. By the *SCHOLASTIC PHILOSOPHY*, using the terms in a general sense, we mean those topics, which were most examined and insisted on during that period.

The learning of the *SCHOOLS* may in general be referred to three great divisions, as follows ;—*ONTOLOGY* or the science of Being in general ;—*NATURAL THEOLOGY*, which seems to have been the application of the principles of ontology to the particular existences, called God and angels ; and *PNEUMATOLOGY* or doctrines having relation to the human mind.

The following are some of the inquiries, which were warmly agitated during the period now under examination.

Whether the Deity can exist in imaginary space no less than in the space which is real? Whether the Deity loves a possible unexisting angel better than an insect in actual existence?

Whether the essence of the mind be distinct from its existence? And whether its essence might, therefore, subsist, when it had no actual existence?

Whether angels can visibly discern objects in the dark? Or whether they can pass from one point of space to another without passing through the intermediate points?

Such inquiries, it will readily be admitted, were worse

than fruitless. But Intellectual Philosophy, as it exists at the present day, evidently ought not to be estimated by what it was in the scholastic ages. If, therefore, the prejudice, which has been mentioned as prevailing against this science, be in any measure founded on the frivolous discussions of the Schools, it is so far unjust ; since it is now prosecuted on different principles and with different results.

### §. 3. Supposed practical inutility of this science.

A second ground of the prejudice, existing against this science, is the prevalence of a false opinion of its practical inutility. In studying Intellectual Philosophy, we are supposed in the erroneous opinion, which has been mentioned, to learn in a scientific form only what we have previously learnt from nature ; we acquire nothing new, and the time, therefore, which is occupied in this pursuit, is mispent.

All persons, however ignorant, know what it is, to think, to imagine, to feel, to perceive, to exercise belief. All persons know the fact in Intellectual Philosophy, that memory depends on attention ; and when asked, why they have forgotten things, which occurred yesterday in their presence, think it a sufficient answer to say, that they did not attend to them. Every body is practically acquainted with the principle of association. Even the uneducated groom, who has the sagacity to feed his horses to the sound of the drum and bugle, as a training preparatory to their being employed in military service, discovers a knowledge of it.

From some facts of this kind, which may safely be admitted to exist, the opinion has arisen of the practical inutility of studying Intellectual Philosophy as a science.

### §. 4. Its supposed practical inutility answered.

If, however, these facts be admitted to be a valid objection in application to this study, the same objection evidently exists to the study of other sciences, for instance, Natural Philosophy. It is remarked of savages, that they

gain an eminence before they throw their missile weapons, in order by the aid of such a position to increase the momentum of what is thrown. They do this without any scientific knowledge of the accelerating force of gravity. The sailor, who has perhaps never seen a mathematical diagram, practically understands, as is evident from the mode in which he handles the ropes of the vessel, the composition and resolution of forces. In a multitude of instances, we act on principles, which are explained and demonstrated in some of the branches of Natural Philosophy. We act on them, while we are altogether ignorant of the science. But no one, it is presumed, will consider this a good excuse for making no philosophical and systematic inquiries into that department of knowledge.

But without contenting ourselves with the answer, which has now been given to the objection, that the study, upon which we are entering, is of no practical profit, as well as to the preceding objection, some remarks will be made, more directly and positively showing its beneficial results.

§ 5. Intellectual Philosophy should be studied because it tends to gratify a reasonable curiosity.

If it were true, that the practical good results of a prosecution of this science are exceedingly inconsiderable, it might, nevertheless, be properly studied, because a natural and reasonable curiosity is in this way gratified. The botanist examines the seed of a plant and its mode of germination, the root and the qualities by which it is fitted to act as an organ of nutrition and support, the structure of the stem, and the form of the leaves. The mineralogist inquires into the properties, the constituent parts, and the relations of the various mineral masses, which enter into the formation of the earth's surface. And whatever opinion may exist as to the amount of practical benefit resulting from inquiries into these departments of science, they are justly considered as exceedingly commendable, and as suitable to the inquisitive turn of an intellectual being. In other words, the constitution of the mind itself, which in its very nature is restless and inquisitive,

is regarded as a pledge of the propriety of such inquiries, independently of their subserviency to the indirect increase of human happiness. But it is certainly not too much to say, that the soul of man presents a nobler subject of examination, than the inanimate masses of matter beneath his feet, or the flowers, that open and bloom around him. What we term matter is compounded; it exists under a great variety of forms; it is susceptible of a separation into parts, is continually changing, is perishable. But the mind is known to us only under the modifications of thought and feeling; it is indivisible, for no one is conscious or can be conscious of a want of unity in thought; its nature continues the same amid the continual changes and decays of material existences, and what is a further evidence of its superiour claims on our attention, it is always widening its range and strengthening its susceptibilities of knowledge.

§ 6. Intellectual Philosophy teaches us how to direct our inquiries.

Although the intellectual part of man possesses great inherent energies, and these, its natural capabilities are continually increasing in strength, it has its boundaries. And here we find another of the good results of a knowledge of Intellectual Philosophy, that we are taught by it to limit our inquiries to those subjects, to the investigation of which our capacities are equal and are adapted. The Supreme Being is an all pervading mind, a principle of life, that has an existence in all places and in all space, and whose intelligence is like his omnipresence, acquainted with all things. But man, his creature, is made with an inferiour capacity; he knows only in part, and it is but reasonable to suppose, that there are many things, which he will never be able to know. But, although it be justly admitted, that man is subordinate to the Supreme Being and is infinitely inferiour to Him, his Maker has kindly given him aspirations after knowledge, with the power of satisfying, in some measure and under certain limitations, such aspirations. If, therefore, man be a being, formed to know, and there be, moreover, certain restrictions, pla-

ced upon the capacity of knowledge, it is highly important to ascertain the limitations, whatever they may be, which are imposed. Nor is this always an easy thing to be determined. There is oftentimes a difficulty in ascertaining precisely the boundary, which runs between the possibility and the impossibility of knowledge, but whenever it is ascertained, there is an indirect increase of mental ability by means of the withdrawal of the mind from unprofitable pursuits, in which there is an expense of effort without any remuneration.

When, for example, a piece of wood, or any other of those material bodies, by which we are surrounded, is presented to any one for his examination, there are some things in this material substance, which may be known, and others, which cannot. Its colour, its hardness or softness, its extension are subjects, upon which he can inform himself, can reason, can arrive at knowledge. He opens his eye; an impression is made on the organ of vision, and he has the idea of colour. By means of the application of his hand to the wood, he learns the penetrability or impenetrability, the softness or hardness of the mass, which he holds. By moving his hand from one point to another in the mass, he is informed of the continuity or extension of its parts. But when he pushes his inquiries beneath the surface of this body, when he attempts to become acquainted not only with its qualities, but with that supposed something, in which those qualities are often imagined to inhere, and, in a word, expends his efforts, in obedience to this unprofitable determination, in learning what matter is, independently of its properties, he then stumbles on a boundary, which cannot be passed, and seeks for knowledge where by their very constitution men are not permitted to know.—The necessity of ascertaining what things come within the reach of our powers and what do not, was a thought, which laid the foundation of Mr. Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding.

§. 7. Remarks of Mr. Locke on this point.

“Were it fit to trouble thee with the history of this Essay (he remarks in the Epistle to the reader) I should

tell thee, that five or six friends meeting at my chamber and discoursing on a subject very remote from this, found themselves quickly at a stand by the difficulties that arose on every side. After we had awhile puzzled ourselves without coming any nearer a resolution of those doubts, which perplexed us, it came into my thoughts; that we took a wrong course, and that before we set ourselves upon inquiries of that nature, it was necessary to examine our own abilities, and see what objects our understandings were or were not fitted to deal with. This I proposed to the company, who all readily assented, and thereupon it was agreed, that this should be our first inquiry."

Such were the sentiments on this subject of a man, who has probably contributed more largely than any other individual to help us to the correct understanding of the mind; and whose writings, such is their singular originality and acuteness, can hardly be too strongly recommended for perusal.

#### §. 8. Helps us in the correction of mental errors.

A third advantage resulting from the study of the Philosophy of the Mind, is, that it teaches us in many cases to correct whatever deficiencies or errors may exist in our mental constitution.

In our present state of imperfection, while we are found to experience various kinds of bodily evils, we are not exempt from those of the mind; and we know not, that it can any more excite surprise, that some people exhibit mental distortions, than it can, that we daily see not only the healthy and the well-formed, but the maimed, the halt, and the blind. If then it be asked, how are these various mental defects to be remedied, the answer is obvious, that we should act in regard to the mind, as we do in promoting the restoration of the body; we should commit the business of ascertaining a remedy to those, who are in some good degree acquainted with the subject and with the nature of the disease. A physician, altogether ignorant of the anatomy and physiology of the human system, would be poorly qualified to relieve a fellow being in sick-

ness, or who had suffered a fracture in his limbs. But if knowledge be necessary, in order to heal the weakness of the body and restore it to its proper soundness and beauty, it is not less important in the restoration of analogous evils in the mental constitution.

In looking round to see, whose minds are disordered, and whose are in a sound and healthy condition, we notice, for example, that some persons are troubled with a very weak memory. We have a very candid confession on this point in the writings of Montaigne. He informs us, that he did not trust to his memory. "I am forced (says he) to call my servants by the names of their employments, or of the countries where they were born, for I can hardly remember their proper names; and if I should live long, I question whether I should remember my own name." It appears, however, from his acquaintance with the principles of the ancient philosophers, that he had not much reason to complain, except of his own inattention to this valuable mental susceptibility. He remembered principles; he could keep in recollection the outlines of the sciences, but could not so well remember insulated facts, especially if they related to the occurrences of common life. This peculiarity in the operations of the memory is not unfrequently found among men of letters, especially if they possess a vivid imagination. But it must be considered a mental defect; one, which it is not only important to understand, but to try to remedy.

Montaigne is a striking instance of failure in one of the varieties of memory, and others fail equally in the power of reasoning, that is, in forming judgments or conclusions by combining together a number of consecutive propositions. And this happens from a variety of causes, as from weakness of attention, or the influence of prejudices, or an ignorance of the nature and sources of evidence, or from other causes, which may be guarded against and controlled. In other cases the mind is thrown into confusion in consequence of such exceeding vividness in the conceptions, as to lead one to mistake the mere objects of thought for real external objects. And again we have

the still more formidable evils of idiocy in its various forms of origin, and of partial and total insanity.

Since then it must be admitted, that there are diseases and distortions of the mind no less than of the body, and that we cannot expect a restoration from those evils without an intimate acquaintance with the state and tendencies of our intellectual powers, such an acquaintance becomes exceedingly desirable.

§. 9. Is a help to those, who have the charge of early education.

This study, in the fourth place, furnishes many very valuable hints to those, who have the charge of early education. It is well known that children and youth adopt almost implicitly the manners and opinions of those, under whom they happen in Providence to be placed, or with whom they much associate, whether they be parents, instructors, or others.

Let it, therefore, be remembered, that passions both good and evil may then rise up and gain strength, which it will afterwards be found difficult to subdue. Intellectual operations may at that period be guided and invigorated, which, if then neglected, can never be called forth to any effective purpose in after life. Habits and associations of various kinds may then be formed, which will defy all subsequent attempts at a removal, and will follow the subject of them down to the grave.

What we learn from every day's observation agrees with what we are taught in the saying of Solomon;—"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

It is, then, reasonably expected of parents and instructors, that they attempt to eradicate in the minds of the young bad passions and foster and sustain those, which are good; that they pursue suitable methods for the invigoration of the reasoning powers, and that they strive to strengthen those various habits and associations, which shall render them good members of a family, useful citizens in the commonwealth; and above all should those



under their care be trained up in the understanding and practice of that religion, which brings peace and hope. When we take these things into view, and when we further recollect the frequency of characteristic, if not original differences in intellectual power and inclination, no one certainly can be considered properly qualified for this great undertaking, who has not formed a systematic and philosophic acquaintance with the principles of the mind.

§. 10. Instructs us not only as to our thoughts but language.

It may not be out of place to remark here, that this science concerns not only the various forms of thought, but the nature of language also, which is the medium of communication, by which our thoughts are made known to others. Here then is another and fifth benefit, which may properly be set up against those objections, which have been made to this interesting department of science, since it is in a great measure by means of language, that different and distant minds hold intercourse, the forms of society are preserved, and the great family of man are enabled to go forth in the path of social and civil melioration.

As words are in themselves mere arbitrary signs, and have no natural or inherent fitness for the expression of the signification, which is attached to them, more than various other signs, which might have been employed, they afford a fruitful subject of remark to the intellectual philosopher, who states the object for which they are used, explains their necessary imperfection, and teaches us in their skilful and appropriate application. And this he is well enabled to do, since it particularly falls to him to inquire into the origin and combinations of thought ; and the notion, which we form of language, always includes not only the written and oral signs, but also the thoughts or mental states, which they are designed to represent.

§. 11. Has a connection with other departments of science.

It is to be considered further, that this department of science has an intimate connection with others, which are

of great importance ; and this connection may be regarded as increasing the urgency of attending to it.—For instance, Intellectual Philosophy has an intimate connection with Moral. In the latter science we bring under consideration injuries, benefits, the nature and obligation of contracts, and the various duties of men ; but such inquiries would be exceedingly fruitless without a thorough acquaintance with the emotions and passions, and with other modifications, both simple and complex, of the intellectual principle.—Intellectual Philosophy has also a close connection with the most important applications of Criticism. It would not be possible to give any rational account of the excellencies or defects of a poem, painting, edifice, or other work of art, without a knowledge of it. For, although we often call such works beautiful and sublime, it is certain, that they cannot possess the qualities of beauty or sublimity, independently of our mental frame, and we never apply those epithets to them, except it be with reference to certain principles within us.—Again, Intellectual Philosophy is closely connected with the science and practice of oratory. We sometimes hear the science of the mind designated as the philosophy of human nature, and nothing certainly is more common than the remark, that a knowledge of human nature is essential to the orator. With how much greater directness and strength he applies his powers of reasoning, when he understands the principles, on which the mind operates in every reasoning process ! With how much greater confidence he attacks prejudices, and rouses or allays the passions, when he has thoroughly meditated the passions, and the various influences, by which our judgments are biased !—It will further be found on examination, that the Philosophy of the Mind has an indirect, but real relation to other departments of knowledge, apparently more remote from it than those, which have been mentioned. It may be thought, that the relation between astronomy and the science of the mind is not very obvious ; but the mind, nevertheless, is the great medium or instrument, by which the astronomer makes his calculations concerning

the motions of the heavenly bodies. It is important, therefore, that he should understand the powers of that instrument, the grounds and certainty of his knowledge; and a similar remark may be made in other cases.

But we leave these and all other considerations, tending to show the utility of this science, with a single reflection more, trusting that it will be enough to justify us in our pursuits.

§. 12. Teaches us to revere the wisdom of our Creator.

We are taught by this science to revere the wisdom of our Creator.—We are frequently referred in theological writings to the works of creation, as a proof of his greatness and wisdom; and the remark has been made, not without reason, that the “*stars teach as well as shine.*” The discoveries of modern astronomy not only assure us, that there is a God, but impart this additional assurance, that he is above all others, to whom the attributes of divinity may have been at any time ascribed.

But it must be added, that of all those created things, which come within the reach of our examination, the human mind is that principle, which evinces the most wonderful construction, which discloses the most astonishing movements. There is much to excite our admiration in the harmonious movements of the planetary orbs, in the rapidity of light, in the process of vegetation; but still greater cause for it in the principle of thought, in the inexpressible quickness of its operations, in the harmony of its laws, and in the greatness of its researches. How striking are the powers of that intellect, which, although it have a local habitation, is able to look out from the place of its immediate residence, to pursue its researches among those remote worlds, which journey in the vault of heaven, and to converse both with the ages past and to come.

It ought not to be expected that we should be intimately acquainted with a principle possessing such striking powers, without some reverential feelings towards him, who is the author of it.

## §. 13. Of the mental effort necessary in this study.

In concluding these remarks on the utility of the Philosophy of the Mind, it ought not to be concealed, that our early intellectual habits present an obstacle to the easy and ready prosecution of it. We are so formed, that we naturally give our attention first to external things. The varieties of colour and sound, the pleasures of taste and touch are continually giving us new intimations, and drawing the soul incessantly out of itself to the contemplation of the exterior causes of the perceptions and emotions, by which it is agitated. Hence, when we are called to look within, and as the Arabians sometimes say, *'to shut the windows, in order that the house may be light,'* we find it to be a process, to which we are unaccustomed, and, therefore, difficult.

Although the direct mental effort be not greater in this, than in some other departments of science, it is, in consequence of the circumstance just mentioned, exceedingly painful to some, and certainly requires patience and resolution in all. And perhaps this is one cause of the unfavourable reception, which this department of knowledge has often met with.

But the advantages attending it are so numerous, it is to be hoped, they will overcome any disinclination to the necessary mental exertion. The fruits of the earth are purchased by the sweat of the brow, and it has never been ordered, that the reverse of this shall take place in the matters of knowledge, and that the fruits of science shall be reaped by the hands of idleness. No man has ever become learned without toil; and let it be remembered, if there be many obstacles in the acquisition of any particular science, that he, who overcomes a multiplication of difficulties, deserves greater honour than he, who contends only with a few.

## CHAPTER SECOND.

### IMPLIED OR PRIMARY TRUTHS.

#### §. 14. Importance of certain preliminary statements in Intellectual Philosophy.

**I**T is often highly important, in the investigation of a science, to state, at the commencement of such investigations, what things are to be considered as preliminary and taken for granted, and what are not. If this precaution had always been observed, which, where there is any room for mistake or misapprehension, seems so reasonable, how many useless disputes would have been avoided ;— the paths to knowledge would have been rendered more direct and easy, instead of being prolonged and perplexed. It is impossible to proceed with inquiries in the science of **INTELLECTUAL PHILOSOPHY**, as it will be found to be in almost every other, without a proper understanding of those fundamental principles, which are necessarily involved in what follows.

Those preliminary principles, which are necessary to be admitted, and without which we are unable to proceed with any satisfaction and profit in our inquiries, will be called, for the sake of distinction and convenience, **PRIMARY TRUTHS**.

There would seem to be no impropriety in calling them **TRUTHS**, since they are forced upon us, as it were, by our very constitution ; all mankind admit them in practice, however some may affect to deny them with their lips ; and they are as plain and incontrovertible at their very first enunciation, as any discoveries in physics, or any demon-

strations in geometry. We call them **PRIMARY**, because they are the ultimate propositions, into which all reasoning resolves itself, and are necessarily involved and implied in all the investigations, which we shall make on the present subject.—The first of this class of truths, which will come under consideration, is this ;

§. 15. There are original and authoritative grounds of belief.

Nothing is better known, than that there is a certain state of the mind, which is expressed by the term, **BELIEF**. As we find all men acting in reference to it, it is not necessary to enter into any verbal explanation. Nor would it be possible by such explanation to increase the clearness of that notion, which every one is already supposed to entertain.—Of this belief, we take it for granted, and hold it to be in the strictest sense true, that there are original and authoritative grounds or sources ; meaning by the term, **original**, that these grounds or sources are involved in the nature of the mind itself, and meaning by the term, **authoritative**, that this belief is not a matter of chance or choice, but naturally and necessarily results from our mental constitution. Sometimes we can trace the state of the mind, which we term belief, to an affection of the senses, sometimes to that quick, internal perception, which is termed intuition, and at others to human testimony. In all these cases, however, the explanation, which we attempt to give, is limited to a statement of the circumstances, in which the belief arises. But the fact, that belief arises under these circumstances, is ultimate, is a primary law ; and being such, it no more admits of explanation, than does the mere feeling itself.—And further, this belief may exist as really, and may control us as strongly, when we are unable to give a particular and accurate account of the circumstances, in which it may arise, as at other times. We find ourselves continually compelled to act upon it, when the only possible answer we can give, is, that we are human beings, or that we believe, because we find it impossible to do otherwise.—A second of this class of truths declares or takes for granted,

## §. 16. The reality and certainty of our personal existence.

Des Cartes formed the singular resolution, not to believe his own existence, until he could prove it.

He reasoned thus; *Cogito, ergo sum*, I think, therefore, I exist. This argument, which he considered conclusive and incontrovertible, evidently involves what is termed a *petitio principii* or begging of the question.

It is easy to perceive, that the very thing to be proved is assumed. *COGITO* is equivalent to the proposition, *I am a thinking being*; and *ERGO SUM* may be literally interpreted, *therefore, I am in being*. His premises had already implied, that he existed as a thinking being, and it is these very premises, which he employs in proof of his existence: The acuteness, which has generally been attributed to him, evidently failed him in this instance. The argument of Des Cartes was unsuccessful, and no one, who has attempted to prove the same point, has succeeded any better.

It is necessary to take different ground from that taken by this philosopher and his followers. We consider the belief of our existence a PRIMARY TRUTH. A few remarks may tend to show the propriety of thus doing.

There was a time when man did not exist. He had no form, no knowledge. Light, and motion, and matter were things, in which he had no concern. He was created from nothing with such powers and such laws to his powers, as his Creator saw fit to give.

We are called upon to mark the history of this new created being.—In the earliest months or even weeks of its existence, we will suppose, that some external object is, for the first time, presented to its senses. The result of this is, that there is an impression made on the senses; and then at once there is a change in the mind, a new thought, a new feeling. But we hold it to be impossible for the child to undergo this newness of internal experience without a simultaneous conviction of the real existence of itself, as susceptible of this new thought or feel-

ing. And this idea or conviction of personal existence, which arises at this very early period, is continually suggested and confirmed in the course of the successive duties, and enjoyments, and sufferings of life. This is a result, which is necessarily involved in our mental constitution, and which, as it has such an origin, neither fears any refutation, nor requires any argument in its support.

Malebranche in his *Search after Truth* speaks much in commendation of what he has termed the spirit of doubting. But then he bestows this commendation with such limitations as will prevent those evils, which result from too freely giving up to a sceptical spirit.

"To doubt (says he) with judgment and reason, is not so small a thing as people imagine, for here it may be said, that there's a great difference between doubting and doubting. We doubt through passion and brutality, through blindness and malice, and, lastly, through fancy, and only because we would doubt. But we doubt also with prudence and caution, with wisdom and penetration of mind. Academics and atheists doubt upon the first grounds, true philosophers on the second. The first is a doubt of darkness, which does not conduct us into the light, but always removes us from it." (B. I. ch. 20.)

We may remark in conformity with this distinction of Malebranche, that the doubting of those over-scrupulous inquirers, who demand proof of their own existence, is of that kind, to which he so justly objects. Scepticism on that subject is truly a doubt of darkness, which does not conduct us into the light, but always removes us from it. A third of those preliminary truths or propositions, which we term PRIMARY, is this ;

§. 17. The belief and certainty of our personal identity.

It is necessary to make the remark here, that a distinction has very properly been made between personal identity, and mental and bodily identity.—By the phrase, mental identity, we express the continuance and oneness of the thinking principle merely ; and by bodily identity, we mean the sameness of the bodily shape and



general organization. We cannot attach any other meaning to the latter phrase in consequence of the constant changes in the material particles, which compose our bodily systems. In those more general apprehensions, however, which we attach to the phrase, personal identity, we have reference both to the one and the other, the mind and the body, and combine together the two ideas, which are conveyed in the two phrases before mentioned, viz., mental identity and bodily identity. In other words, when it is said, that any one is conscious of, knows, or has a certainty of his personal identity, it is meant to be asserted, that he is conscious of having formerly possessed the powers of an organized, animated, and rational being, and that he still possesses those powers. There is no mystery in this; it is plain and easily understood; and we are led, therefore, to assent, that a belief in personal identity or a conviction and knowledge, that there has been such a continuance of our being, is to be regarded, and with abundant reason, as a primary truth.

In the **FIRST** place, the mere fact, that it is constantly implied in those conclusions, which we form in respect to the future from the past, and universally in our daily actions, is of itself a sufficient ground for reckoning it among the original and essential intimations of the human intellect. On any other hypothesis we are quite unable to account for that practical recognition of it in the pursuits of men, which is at once so evident and so universal.—The farmer, for instance, who looks abroad on his cultivated fields, knows, that he is identically the same person, who, twenty years before, entered the forest with an axe on his shoulder, and felled the first tree. The aged soldier, who recounts at his fireside the battles of his youth, never once doubts that he was himself the witness of those sanguinary scenes, which he delights to relate. It is alike useless to attempt to deny or to prove to them a proposition, which they believe and know, not from reasoning but from their very nature; and which, it is sufficiently evident, can never be eradicated from their belief and knowledge, until that nature is changed.

A SECOND circumstance in favour of regarding the notion of personal identity, as an admitted or primary truth, is, that from the nature of the case no train of reasoning, (what may be termed an *argument*,) can be employed in reference to it, either for or against. The truth of this remark will appear on examination.—There evidently can be no argument, properly so called, unless there be a succession of distinct propositions. From such a succession of propositions, no conclusion can be drawn by any one, unless he be willing to trust to the evidence of memory. But memory involves a notion of the time past, and whoever admits, that he has the power of memory, in however small a degree, virtually admits, that he has existed identically the same at some former period, as at present.

The considerations, which we have now particularly in view and which are greatly worthy of attention in connection with the principle under examination, may with a little variation of terms be stated thus.

Remembrance, without the admission of our personal identity, is clearly an impossibility. But there can be no process of reasoning without memory. This is evident, because arguments are made up of propositions, which are successive to each other, not only in order, but in point of time. It follows, then, that there can be no argument whatever, or on any subject, without the admission of our identity, as a point, from which to start. What then will it avail to attempt to reason either for or against the views, which are here maintained, since in every argument which is employed, there is necessarily an admission of the very thing, which is the subject of inquiry.

A fourth of those TRUTHS or fundamental propositions, which we term primary, may thus be stated ;

§. 18. The external, material world has an existence.

The Pyrrhonic sect, so named from Pyrrho, its founder, a native of Elea, who flourished in the fourth century before Christ, called in question the truth of every system of opinions, adopted by other sects. Hence they have been also called Sceptics and the Sceptical sect ; names, which,

of matter, which makes a part of ourselves, than in those material existences by which we are asserted to be surrounded.

THIRDLY ; whatever may be the idea of Sceptics on this point, the great mass of mankind believe in the existence of the Deity ; a being of perfect truth as well as benevolence. But to create man so that he should be irresistibly led to believe in the existence of a material world, when it did not exist, to create him with high capacities of thought, feeling, and action, and then to surround him with mere illusive and imaginary appearances, does not agree with that notion of God, which we are wont to entertain.

FURTHERMORE ; it must be admitted, as has already been stated, that there are certain original sources or grounds of belief in our constitution. To say otherwise would be to loosen and destroy the foundations of all knowledge, whether that knowledge concerned matter or mind. But what evidence is there, that there are such original sources of belief, or that any one thing in particular is the foundation of such belief more than any other thing ? The answer is, our own internal consciousness and conviction, and this merely. But the intimations from the senses as effectually control our belief, as any other source of evidence whatever. Our consciousness, our internal conviction tells us, that our belief is as decisively regulated by the perceptions, derived through the senses, as by our intuitive or inductive perceptions ; and that they are as much a ground of knowledge. We assert this with confidence ; therefore, if the senses are not a ground of belief and knowledge, the way is fairly open for unlimited scepticism on all subjects. It will in this case be impossible to fix upon any thing whatever, which is to be received as evidence, and men must give up all knowledge of intellect as well as matter, and will be at once released from all moral obligation.

Admitting, therefore, the existence of the material world without further remark on the subject, we come to a FIFTH PRIMARY TRUTH, which will be found to enter very extensively into all our investigations concerning the mind, viz.

## §. 19. Confidence is to be reposed in the memory.

It has already appeared, that there are within us certain grounds or sources of belief. This subject was briefly considered in the last section, and also in one preceding.—The senses, the mind itself in the exercise of its intuitive and inductive powers, and human testimony are some of these sources; the MEMORY is another, which is to be separately, though briefly considered here.

When we say, that confidence is to be reposed in the memory, it is not meant to be asserted, that we are liable to no mistakes from that source. It is merely meant, that when we are satisfied, that our memory fully and correctly retains any perceptions of whatever kind of a former period, we receive such remembrances with as much confidence and act upon them as readily, as if the original perceptions were now present to the mind. Without this confidence in the memory we could hardly sustain an existence; we certainly could not derive any thing in aid of that existence from the experience of the past.

Our past life has been a series of perceptions or of different states of the mind, following each other in rapid and almost unbroken succession.

But if we are asked on what principle we are led to recognize our former states of mind as a part of the sum of our present and actually existing knowledge; all the answer, which can be given to this inquiry, is, that, in the original designation of those principles or tendencies, which were selected for the composition and effective action of our intellectual being, we are so constituted as to place a perfect reliance on the reports of that mental operation, which we term the memory; and this statement is equally satisfactory and the only satisfactory account, whether we consider the memory a simple or a complex exercise of the mind. Leaving this last point to some subsequent opportunity of considering it, we are to assign, in this preliminary enumeration, the sixth and last place to this proposition, viz.,

## §. 20. Human Testimony is to be received as a ground of knowledge.

It may be objected to the admission of this proposition, as a preliminary truth, that we are often led into mistakes by the statements of men. This is not denied. But then it may be answered, that the errors, into which we are led from this source, are analogous to those, into which we are sometimes betrayed by means of the senses, and even by the memory itself; and which were not thought sufficient to reject them from being considered grounds of belief and knowledge. In all these cases, we are not subjected to errors without the means of guarding against, and of correcting them; and in respect to human testimony in particular, we are by no means required to place confidence in it, without a regard to the circumstances, under which it is given. All, that is meant by the proposition laid down, is, that when we are satisfied a person has possessed ample means of information, and have no room to suspect the influence of interest or passion on his testimony, we are to receive, and to rely upon it. The propriety of placing confidence in testimony under these circumstances we regard as a primary truth, as something to be taken for granted in our inquiries. And we do this, without at present entering into the ground or origin of this confidence, since this is a subject, which can be subsequently considered, and however it may be settled, is not essential to the present assumption, provided the mere existence of such confident reliance be admitted.

It remains, therefore, to be briefly remarked, in support of the view of this subject, which is proposed to be taken, (1), That reliance on human testimony, or the reception of such testimony as a ground of belief and knowledge, is agreeable to the common sense of mankind. The conviction of the great mass of mankind on this subject, when it is fairly presented to them, is not merely prompt and deeply rooted, but is irresistible. If a person should seriously deny the truth of a well attested statement in history, or question the well attested existence of a distant nation or city, merely because the evidence is

that of human testimony, he would be thought insane.

Let it be noticed, (2), That without this assumption discoveries in the sciences would in a great measure cease, and in that of the Mind not less than in others. The sciences are built, not on the experience of an individual merely, but of many; and the conveyance of the multiplied experiences of different individuals into the common mass of knowledge, is by means of testimony. Many of the important conclusions, which we ascertain in the Science of the Mind, are founded on facts, derived from a multitude of individuals; and as these facts are given as the testimony of these persons, they are of no use, unless we admit human testimony to be an authoritative ground of belief.

§. 21. Of the distinction between primary and ultimate truths.

Such propositions or truths, as are here called PRIMARY, are sometimes spoken of as ultimate; nor is this last epithet improperly applied to them. But there seems, nevertheless, good reason for proposing the following distinction, viz. Primary truths may be always regarded as ultimate, but not all ultimate truths are primary. Primary truths are such as are necessarily implied in the various exercises of the reasoning faculty, and are antecedent to them; and being not only the necessary, but among the earliest products of the understanding, may also properly be called ultimate. But we also apply the epithet, ultimate, to those general truths, facts, or laws in our intellectual economy, which are ascertained by the examination and comparison of many particulars, and which are supposed to be unsusceptible of any further generalization.—For instance, when the rays of light reach the retina of the eye and inscribe upon it the picture of some external object, there immediately follows that state of the mind, which we call sight or visual perception.—Again, when we behold certain appearances in the external world, such as green fields, enriched with rivulets, and ornamented with flowers and trees, there immediately exists within us that pleasurable feeling, which is termed an emotion

of beauty.—Supposing ourselves to have come in such cases as these, as Mr. Locke says, “to the length of our tether,” and to be incapable of making any further analysis, we call such truths, facts, or laws, *ultimate*. For the existence of these ultimate truths or laws we can give no other reason than this, that we are so formed, and that they are permanent and original characteristics of the mind. All the inquiries, which we are hereafter to make, will continually imply the existence of such ultimate and original laws, and it will be one great object to ascertain what are truly such.—But as the actual knowledge of these general facts is not an absolute prerequisite to the conduct of life, and in particular as it is not necessarily antecedent to the exercise of the reasoning faculty, we cannot call them *PRIMARY* in the same sense, in which the term has been applied to certain facts in our constitution already mentioned.

§. 22. Admission of primary truths agreeable to right feelings towards the Supreme Being.

The Supreme Being created the mind; he gave it powers, and erected its impassable limits. To have created the mind with the capacity of knowledge without limits, would have been the same as to have disrobed himself of the attribute of omniscience, and to have conferred it upon man. Possessed, therefore, of an intellect circumscribed in its very nature and origin, it ought not to be considered strange, that we should find ourselves, from the onset, under the necessity of taking certain principles for granted, as the conditions and auxiliaries of our subsequent inquiries. So that it is not too much to say, that, in altogether rejecting such preliminary principles, we not only unsettle the foundations of belief and reasoning, but offer violence to our moral, as well as intellectual nature. Because in attempting to pass those limits, which are always implied in the admission of preliminary truths, we show a forgetfulness and disregard of that Being, who has assigned them. Therefore, in assuming the protection of certain primary propositions, which are beyond the reach

of the reasoning power, but which are, nevertheless, its great supports and auxiliaries, we seem to act not unsuitably to the relation we sustain to Him, and to the humility of all true wisdom.

**NOTE.** The following are some of the works, which have treated more or less largely of the topics, which have been embraced in this chapter. The views, which they present, are not always consistent with each other and are sometimes very diverse, but are in general worthy of being consulted by those, who have leisure to examine what has been said by different writers.

Malebranche's Search after Truth, (*Recherche de la Verite*,) Bk. I. Brucker's History of Philosophy, (*Historia critica philosophia*,) ART. Pyrrhonic Sect. Claude Buffier's First Truths, (*Premieres Verites*,) PT. I. Oswald's Appeal to Common Sense. Beattie's Essay on Truth. Reid's Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense. Priestley's Examination of Reid, Beattie, and Oswald. Bishop Butler's Dissertation on Personal Identity. Stewart's Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind. VOL. II. CHAP. I., &c.——Of the above works, Buffier's First Truths, of which a translation into English was published at London in 1780, is particularly worthy of the student's attention.



## CHAPTER THIRD.

### ORIGINAL STATE OF THE MIND.

§. 23. Of the thoughts of the soul in distinction from the soul itself.

**A**MONG other opinions of Des Cartes was this, that the soul always thinks; and he even hazarded the further assertion, that its very essence consists in the exercise of thinking; but says Father Buffier very justly, "it does not appear, that he had any invincible testimony of the matter." We consider it enough to say, that the soul exists; we suppose that no one seriously doubts it, or can doubt it; although it cannot be too often repeated, that we are absolutely ignorant of its essence. If it be asked then, What do we know in respect to the soul? The answer is, We know its existence; and further we know its modifications; that is, its acts, states, or ideas, together with the laws, which regulate them.

It is, therefore, deemed sufficient to say, that the soul makes itself known by means of thought, without asserting or believing, that thought is all that is meant, when we use the term, soul, or mind. And we not only contend, that there is a distinction between the soul and thought, but further suppose, that the distinct existence of the soul is always implied and taken for granted in the mere use of the term, thought, as its meaning is commonly understood. And this appears for these brief reasons. It is a conclusion of common sense, the dictate of the universal mind of man, that every action supposes an agent, and every quality supposes a subject, and every modification suppo-

ses something which is modified. Now, whether thought be considered an action, or a quality, or a modification, the very language itself involves, that there is a really existent something, of which such act, quality, or modification can be predicated. And as will again be noticed in a future chapter, the modifications or acts, by which the thinking principle makes itself known, sustain the same relation to the mind or soul, which the properties and qualities of material bodies sustain to matter. This statement agrees precisely with many expressions, which are in common use, such as the soul has ideas, the soul thinks, the soul possesses or acquires knowledge, &c.

#### §. 24. Of original or innate knowledge.

It appearing that a distinction may be rightfully drawn between what may be termed the subjective existence of the mind and its mere modifications or thoughts, (although we know not what that subjective existence is,) we are thence led to inquire; When the mind first begins to think? or what is nearly the same question, What is the original state of the mind in respect to knowledge?—In reply it is particularly to be remarked, that our knowledge, originates in the senses; that is, by means of the senses or in connection with them. The evidence of this will hereafter more fully appear, although the knowledge, which thus arises, is subsequently the occasion of other knowledge, of which the mind itself is truly and exclusively the source. Believing, therefore, that the mind is capable of existing independently of the senses, and also that it puts forth its very first acts in connection with the senses, we infer, that it is originally destitute of knowledge, or at least relatively to that complex being, which we call ourselves. If it be objected, that we are unable to form a conception of the mind existing without thought, (even admitting it to be possible and even probable,) we still resort to the great fact in our mental history, which various circumstances combine clearly to establish, that no thought is ever developed in that complex being, which we call by the general name of *man* or *ourselves*, prior to the mediation and aid

of the senses. As far, therefore, as this point is of any consequence to men, or is ever likely to be satisfactorily inquired into, we hold to the above inference, and agree with Mr. Locke, that the primitive condition of the human intellect may be compared, in a certain sense, to a piece of white paper, and that it may truly be considered as originally without knowledge.

§. 25. Opinions on this subject before the time of Locke.

The publication of Mr. Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding has justly been considered as fixing an era in the science of Intellectual Philosophy. Before the publication of this work, which was in the year 1690, the doctrine of innate or connatural ideas was widely prevalent. By the phrase, innate, or, to use an expression less ambiguous, connatural ideas, is to be understood certain ideas and propositions, which were held to be wrought into their intellectual nature, and to be born with all mankind. It was maintained, that they were limited to no one class, neither to the rich nor the poor, neither to the learned nor the ignorant, to no clime and to no country, but all participated in them alike. These propositions and ideas, being coetaneous with the existence of the soul, and being there established at the commencement of its existence by the ordinance of the Deity, were regarded as the first principles of knowledge, and as the rules, by which men were to be guided in all their reasonings about natural and moral subjects. From these innate and original propositions the following may be selected as specimens of the whole ;

§. 26. Enumeration of innate or connatural principles.

(1) Of the natural kind,

Viz., The whole is greater than a part ; Whatsoever is, is ; It is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be at the same time and in the same sense.

(2) Of the moral kind,

Viz., Parents must be honoured ; Injury must not be done ; Contracts should be fulfilled, &c.

(3) Of the religious kind,

Viz., There is a God ; God is to be worshipped ; God will approve virtue and punish vice.

If these propositions are innate or connatural with the mind, then the ideas of which they are composed, must be innate ; so that, whatever the number of propositions, there will be a yet greater number of innate ideas.

The doctrine of the existence of such innate ideas and propositions was supported by Des Cartes and Malebranche, names of such celebrity as to give at least a temporary currency to almost any opinion. The principal argument in support of this doctrine seems to have been this ;

§. 27. Argument on the subject of innate knowledge.

All mankind universally exhibit an acquaintance with, and give their assent to ideas and propositions of this description ; hence they are innate.

This argument is considered inconclusive, because the statement, which is made in it, is justly maintained to be untrue. It is undoubtedly the fact, that a part of the human race remain ignorant through life of the greater number, if not all of the propositions in question. The history of Savage tribes teaches us this.

But admitting that all men are acquainted with them and assent to them, this by no means proves them innate, so long as we can account for this acquaintance and this assent in some other way. It is admitted by all, that the mind exists, and that it possesses the power or the ability to acquire knowledge. If, therefore, in the exercise of this ability, which all admit it to have, we can come to the knowledge of what are called innate or connatural ideas and propositions, it is quite unphilosophical to assign to them another origin, in support of which no positive proof can be brought.

Further ; if the doctrine of innate knowledge be admitted, ideas and propositions of this kind may be multiplied to any extent ; every one will imagine himself at liberty to add to the number ; they will unnecessarily be brought forward on a variety of occasions, and a most per-

plexing hindrance be thrown in the way of free inquiry and of the progress of knowledge. i

§. 28. Mr. Locke's opinions on this subject.

Mr. Locke in the first book of his *Essay on the Human Understanding* has examined this subject at very considerable length. It has indeed been said of his argument, that it is both too long and not always sufficiently to the point, but it makes up in the variety and weight of its considerations, what it wants in exactness of arrangement; and it will be found by no means easy to confute it.

It is one among the merits of this writer, that he has successfully laboured to do away many of our ancient prejudices, (what may be termed the rubbish of the science,) and shown us where to make a good and satisfactory beginning. In accordance with what there is so much evidence to consider the true doctrine, we are presented in his writings with the mind, not as a mere recipient, already in a good degree filled up with articles of knowledge, but as a principle or power of action; and all we have to do, is, to mark its operations, as they necessarily exist in consequence of its being furnished with the aid of the senses and surrounded with material objects. It knows nothing at the first; but it possesses the ability to explore the forms of matter in its various shapes, to mark the aspects and the operations of intellect; and in this way it becomes possessed of a great variety of information. It is, therefore, a most wonderful principle, and, as it raises us far above the brute creation, it would for its own nobleness be highly worthy of the student's attention, even if no practical benefit should result from the pursuit.

§ 29. Opinions of Plato and Aristotle.

It may properly enough be remarked here, that the discussion on the subject of innate ideas and propositions is one of long standing. We refer in this remark to the statement, which a French writer, *De GERANDO*, in his *History of Philosophy*, has given of the conflicting opinions of Plato and Aristotle, taking the translation of the passage,

as we find it in an American periodical publication of merited reputation. ("Ideas, (says Plato,) are not made up of deductions from experience. They have a different origin. It would be impossible to explain the production of them, if they were not independent of experience, and, consequently, innate, that is, placed in the mind by God himself, to serve as the elements of knowledge. Before they were communicated to us, they dwelt in the Divine mind, as so many forms or models, according to which the Deity arranged the universe.")

The following is the reply of Aristotle. "If ideas are innate (he says) how happens it, that we are not always conscious of them? And that it is so long before we obtain the knowledge, which they ought to impart to us? How can we have an idea of a thing, which we never perceived? To call our ideas models, on which existing objects were formed, is merely a poetical figure.

Who is there, that acts with his eyes fixed on these supposed models? We know, that objects may exist, may be made without reference to them."

"Plato was, therefore, (he says,) clearly in an error. His *ideas* are evidently a product of the understanding, formed by a generalization of the particular qualities of individual objects."

It is this very question, namely, Whether we have any ideas, any thing, which can be called knowledge previous to sensation, which divided different writers so late as the time of Des Cartes, who appears to have adopted sentiments, similar to those of Plato. It was this question, therefore, which Mr. Locke thought it necessary to examine at the commencement of his metaphysical writings, and with what ability is generally known.

#### §. 30. Prevailing opinions at the present time.

It would seem then from the remarks, which have been made, that in former times there has been a great diversity of opinion on the subject of the original state of the mind as respects knowledge. This diversity of opinion does not exist in so great a degree at present. Few are found,

who hold to the doctrine of innate or connatural ideas and propositions, as that doctrine was formerly stated and maintained. The opinions of Mr. Locke on this particular subject, and also on the progressive rise and combinations of thought from its simplest to its most complex forms, are adopted, with some slight modifications, by nearly all mental philosophers, not only in America and England, but in France, and on the continent of Europe generally.

In the statements, which are to be made respecting the origin and combinations of our ideas, we have, accordingly, followed in his footsteps with such deviations, as might be expected from more recent, and, in some cases, more accurate and satisfactory inquiries. We take the great mass of knowledge ; we make it the subject of examination, and are able to resolve it into its elements ; and then we gradually trace the history of those elements from its commencement to its completion. This is what has recently been termed *IDEOLOGY*, and seems to be the first great subject of examination in the Philosophy of the Mind ; and we shall be led to see in this particular department of philosophical inquiry, as every where else in nature, what complicated results are made to follow from the operation of a few principles, which at first appeared not only simple, but limited in their application.

NOTE. See, in reference to the subject of this chapter, Locke's Essay concerning Human Understanding, Bk. I. Watt's Philosophical Essays, III. Cudworth's Intellectual System of the Universe, Bk. I. CHAP. 5. Stewart's Philosophical Essays, I. CHAP. 3. Historical Dissertation by the same Author, Pt. II. §. 1. Buffier's First Truths, Pt. II. Adam Smith's History of Ancient Logic and Metaphysics.

## CHAPTER FOURTH.

### THE SENSES AND EXTERNAL PERCEPTION.

#### §. 31. On general classifications of the intellectual powers.

**I**T will assist us in the more ready knowledge and recollection of the statements, which are to be made, and will be a matter of no small convenience, to adopt a common name, and to arrange together those mental states or operations, whether simple or complex, which are of the same nature. To certain operations of the mind of one sort, (that is, which are found to exist only under certain circumstances and to answer to a particular description,) we give the name, PERCEPTION ; while operations or states of another kind, differing from perception and also from each other, are designated by the terms, memory, imagination, reasoning, &c. But it is not necessary for our present purpose to attempt any classification more general than this, although it has often been done, as, for instance, in the well known and superannuated division of the intellect into the Understanding and Will.

The classification of certain operations of the same sort under the names, PERCEPTION, MEMORY, IMAGINATION, &c. is not only a subordinate division, but is in its very nature different. It does not necessarily imply any theory or hypothesis in respect to the mental constitution. These common names are merely abridged or condensed statements of facts in our intellectual history, which are ascertained to exist and to be of frequent recurrence, and which without such common names would continually tax us with



burdensome circumlocutions. But the mere agreement, that certain common names shall stand for certain ascertained facts in our mental economy is a different thing from a classification, which arranges together a multitude of operations, which have no common and distinctive character, with the intention of having them considered as forming an entirely separate fraternity. This has certainly been done in some instances, although the more urgent topics of this chapter will permit only a brief illustration of it.

§. 32. Of the classification into the Understanding and Will.

The operations of the mind as before intimated have formerly been divided and classed under the two general names of the Understanding and Will.

Under the Will seems to have been included that ability, in whatever way it might exhibit itself, which was supposed to be necessary in bringing the mental constitution into action ; it was the mind's operative & controlling principle ; something which moved and governed it. Agreeably, then, to this division, we find, on the one hand, the Will, and, on the other, as its opposite, was the Understanding. To determine, however, what operations belonged to the one and what belonged to the other, was by no means a matter well settled, but of great contention. This difference of opinion could not well have happened, if the classification itself had truly resulted from the constitution of the mind, and if the faculties, which were attributed to the Understanding and Will, had respectively possessed distinctive and common characteristics. This classification, which was once sanctioned with the approbation of great names, has at last fallen into comparative discredit.

§. 33. Of the classification into active and intellectual powers.

Another general classification of the powers of the mind was this, into the Intellectual and the Active powers.

Under the intellectual, were comprehended perception, memory, judgment, reasoning, abstraction, &c. ; under the

active powers, volition, and a variety of emotions, such as pleasure, pain, aversion. This classification, excepting the difference of names, was very similar to the one above mentioned. But, very evidently, positive or active power must be implied in some of the operations termed intellectual, as well as in those, to which the opposite designation is given. That state of the mind which is termed abstraction, or imagination is as positively active as that, which chooses, or loves, or hates.—It may indeed be said, that the epithet, *active*, is employed to express the results of those powers, rather than as intimating any thing in respect to their own interior nature. But if we look merely at the results, it might well be inquired ; Whether there is any thing in our mental economy, which more widely and powerfully conduces to action in men, than the reasoning power ? And the answer must be, although it may be less directly so, it is not less positively and truly active in its external results, than the Will itself, or any of the emotions and passions.

§ 34. Classification into external and internal states of the mind, &c.

Another general classification, which has been more recently proposed in the Lectures on the Philosophy of the Mind of Brown, is this ; into EXTERNAL and INTERNAL states of the mind, with a subordinate division of the second class into INTELLECTUAL states of the mind and EMOTIONS. Some objections have been raised to the phraseology of this classification ; if, for instance, in one of these divisions we substitute the synonymous term, intellect, the phrase, intellectual states of the intellect, which would then arise, presents a tautological and singular mode of expression. And saying nothing of the peculiarity in the combinations of the phrase, it is somewhat difficult to see, why the epithet, *intellectual*, should be more truly and emphatically applied to the second, than to the first and third classes ; for there can be no doubt, that all these classes truly imply modifications of the intellectual principle.—Besides, there are facts in our mental history, arranged under this second division, for instance, those of association, which are not

properly called states of the mind, but rather laws or principles. We know, that the perception of an object will call up or suggest another, which it resembles. The fact, that the subsequent perception arises under these circumstances, is a principle or law of the mind; the perception itself would be called a state of the mind.—And further, if this general classification be adhered to, (and a similar remark will apply to other general classifications,) some important topics will either be entirely excluded, or will be brought in without much regard to the distinctive nature of such general arrangements. Accordingly it might well be inquired, Under what article of the last mentioned classification are we to discuss the nature and grounds of evidence, the forms of mental alienation, &c.?

Hence it has been thought best in this work to avoid adopting any general division, which has at least this favourable circumstance attending it, that we thereby avoid becoming pledged and holden in support of any particular writer or system. The great object we have before us is to ascertain facts in regard to the mind; the arrangement of those facts, and any speculations, which are not directly founded upon them, are subordinate points of consideration. And there is the greater reason for pursuing this course, when it is remembered that men have ever discovered a strong tendency to make premature generalizations. It flatters their pride; and in thus doing they are urged forward by the influence of a puerile vanity more than by the pure love of truth. The history of the Alchemists is a proof of the justness of this remark; they foolishly laboured for ages in search of a simple and primary element; expecting to ascertain the existence of an ideal something, which they called the philosopher's stone, but without success.—“The Philosophy of the Mind (says DE GENANDO) has its Alchemists also; men, whose studies are directed to the pursuit of one single principle, into which the whole science may be resolved; and who flatter themselves with the hope of discovering the grand secret, by which the pure gold of truth may be produced at pleasure.”

## §. 35. Of the meaning of Perception and of its objects.

The term, PERCEPTION, like most others, admits of considerable latitude in its application. In common language we are not only said to have the power of perceiving outward objects, but also of perceiving the agreement or disagreement in the acts of the mind itself. Accordingly we perceive a tree in the forest or a ship at sea, and we also perceive, that the whole is greater than a part, and that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles. In the present chapter we treat exclusively of that perception, which has reference to objects, exterior to the mind; and which is, therefore, properly called external perception. And this in truth is the more frequent, if not the more appropriate application of the term, even when it is employed without any qualifying epithet.—Used with this restricted signification, all things, with which we become acquainted by means of the senses, are its objects. The natural world in all its varieties of form, power, and beauty is submitted to our inspection; and the greater part of the knowledge we are enabled to possess of it we enjoy by means of this mental susceptibility. In all our knowledge, therefore, from this source, two things are to be taken for granted,

- (1) The existence of a material world,
- (2) Certain affections, caused in the organs of sense by external things.

Nor do we anticipate, after what has already been said on the subject of a material world, taken in connection with our consciousness of a susceptibility in our organs of sense of impressions from external objects, that any exception will be taken to these reasonable assumptions.

*External Perception, then, is a state or affection of the mind, which is immediately successive to certain affections of the organs of sense, and which is referred by us to something external as its cause.*

And here we may notice a slight difference in the prevailing usage of the terms, sensation, and perception. The term, sensation, when applied to the mind, expresses merely the state of the mind without reference to its cause.

Perception, when the word is used in relation to the external world, is more complex, including not only the mere state of the mind, but also a reference to the external cause, as above mentioned.

NOTE. It is of some consequence to observe, that the words, affection, idea, thought, sensation, notion, operation, and perception are all in common speech applied to the mind, although some of them not exclusively so, and some more frequently than others. When thus applied, they appear in general to be used as *synonymous*, and to signify merely a state or modification of the thinking principle, excepting, however, the word, perception, which is commonly found to imply more, although this exception does not always hold. No doubt the word, IDEA, originally meant an image or something else in the mind, distinct from the mind itself, and from any of its modifications. But it is quite needless to remark, that this is not the meaning at the present day. Therefore in the present almost indiscriminate application of these terms, we must trust to the connection of the passage for the suggestion of any nicer shades of difference, whenever they may happen to exist.

§. 36. Of the primary and secondary qualities of matter.

The great object, about which our external perceptions are employed, and with which they have the most intimate relation, is the material world. Ignorant of the subjective or real essence of matter, we are able to form an acquaintance with its qualities and properties, and nothing more. Those attributes of bodies, of which we have our chief knowledge by means of the direct and unaided instrumentality of the senses, have been called by writers the *qualities* of bodies. They are considered by Mr. Locke and others under the two heads of Primary and Secondary.

THE PRIMARY QUALITIES are known by being essential to the existence of all bodies. They are extension, figure, divisibility, and solidity; and some writers have included motion. The name of SECONDARY QUALITIES has been given to sound, colour, taste, smell, heat, and cold.

The former class are called PRIMARY for the reason

above given, that all men embrace them in the notion, which they form of matter, and that they are essential to its existence. All bodies have extension, all bodies have figure, all are capable of division, all are solid.

By **SOLIDITY** in bodies is to be understood that quality, by which a body hinders the approach of others, between which it is interposed. In this sense water and all other fluids are solid. If particles of water could be prevented from separating, it would be impossible for any two bodies, between which they might be, to come in contact. This was shown in an experiment, which was once made at Florence. A quantity of water was enclosed in a gold ball, which on the most violent pressure could not be made to fill the internal cavity, until the water inside was forced through the pores.

**DIVISIBILITY** is reckoned among the primary qualities of matter. The smallest particle is susceptible of division; and to that small particle must belong not only divisibility, but the qualities of solidity, extension, and figure.

#### §. 37. Of the sense and the perceptions of smell.

The medium, through which we receive the sensations and perceptions of smell, is the organ, which is termed the olfactory nerve, situated principally in the nostrils, but partly in some continuous cavities. When any odoriferous particles, sent from external objects, affect this organ, there is a certain state of mind produced, which varies with the nature of the odoriferous bodies. But we can no more infer from the sensation itself merely, that there exists any necessary connection between the smell and the external objects, than that there exists a connection between the emotions of joy and sorrow and the same objects. It might indeed be suggested to us by the change in our mental states, that there must be some cause or antecedent to the change, but this suggestion would be far from implying the necessity of a *corporeal* cause.

How then does it happen, that we are not merely sensible of the particular sensation, but refer it at once to

some external object, to the rose, or the honeysuckle? In answer it may be remarked, if we had always been destitute of the senses of sight and touch, this reference never could have been made, but having been furnished with them by the beneficent Author of our being, we make this reference by experience. When we have seen the rose, when we have been near to it and handled it, we have uniformly been conscious of that state of mind, which we term a sensation of smell. When we have come into the neighbourhood of the honeysuckle, or when it has been gathered and presented to us, we have been reminded of its fragrance. And thus, having learnt by experience, that the presence of the odoriferous body is always attended with the sensations of smell, we form the habit of attributing the sensations to that body as their cause. This mental reference is made with almost as much promptness, as if it were necessarily involved in the sensation itself. Accordingly when we are said to perceive the smell, or to have perceptions of the smell of a body, the three things, mentioned in the definition of perception, are always supposed to exist; (1) The presence of the odoriferous body and the affection of its appropriate organ; (2) The change or sensation in the mind; and (3) The reference of the sensation to the external body as its cause.

§. 38. Of the sense and the perceptions of taste.

A sapid body is applied to the organ of taste. The application of such body immediately causes a change or affection of the sensorial organ; and this is at once followed by a mental affection. Thus we have the sensations and perceptions, to which we give the names, sweet, bitter, sour, acrid, &c.

The affections of the mind are referred by us to something, external to itself, which we call bitter, sweet, &c. as their cause. This reference is made very rapidly, so that we at once say of one apple, it is sweet, and of another, it is sour; but it will always be found to be subsequent, in point of time, to the new mental state. As in the case of smells, which have been already remark-

ed upon, the reference is the result of our former experience. We say of one body, it is sweet, and of another, it is acrid, because we have ever observed, that the mental states, indicated by those terms, have always existed in connection with the presence of those bodies.

Whenever, therefore, we say of any bodies, that they are sweet, bitter, acrid, or apply any other epithets, expressive of sapid qualities, we mean to be understood to say, that such bodies are fitted in the constitution of things to cause in the mind the perceptions of sweetness, bitterness, and acridness, or other perceptions, expressed by denominations of taste. Or, in other words, that they are the established antecedents of such mental states, as there is, further than this, no necessary connection between them.

§. 39. Of the sense of hearing and of sounds.

Sounds, which we perceive by means of the sense of hearing, are caused by undulations of elastic air, set in motion by the sonorous body and striking on the tympanum of the ear.

Sounds differ, first, in the tone; secondly, in the strength of the tone. It is remarked by Dr. Reid, that five hundred variations of tone may be perceived by the ear, also an equal number of variations in the strength of the tone; making, as he informs us, by a combination of the tones and of the degrees of strength, not less than twenty thousand simple sounds, differing either in tone or strength.

In a perfect tone a great many undulations of elastic air are required, which must be of equal duration and extent, and follow each other with perfect regularity. Each undulation is made up of the advance and retreat of innumerable particles of elastic air, whose motions are all uniform in direction, force, and time. Accordingly, there will be varieties in the same tone, arising from the position and manner of striking the sonorous body, from the constitution of the elastic medium, and from the state of the organ of hearing.

Different instruments, such as a flute, a violin, and a



bass-viol may all sound the same tone, and yet be easily distinguishable. A considerable number of human voices may sound the same note, and with equal strength, and yet there will be some difference. The same voice, while it maintains the proper distinctions of sound, may yet be varied many ways by sickness or health, youth or age, and other alterations in our bodily condition, to which we are incident.

§. 40. Manner in which we learn the place of sounds.

Previous to all experience, we should not know, whether a sound came from the right or left, from above or below, from a smaller or greater distance.

Dr. Reid mentions, that once, as he was lying abed, having been put into a fright, he heard his own heart beat: He took it to be some one knocking at the door, and arose, and opened the door oftener than once, before he discovered, that the sound was in his own breast. Some traveller has related, that when he first heard the roaring of a lion in a desert wilderness, not seeing the animal, he did not know on what side to apprehend danger, as the sound seemed to him to proceed from the ground, and to enclose a circle, of which he and his companions stood in the centre.

It is by custom or experience, that we learn to distinguish the place of things, and, in some measure also, their nature, by means of their sound. It is thus that we learn, that one noise is in a contiguous room, that another is above our heads, and another in the street. And what seems to be an evidence of this is, that when we are in a strange place, after all our experience, we very frequently find ourselves mistaken in these respects.

If a man born deaf were suddenly made to hear, he would probably consider his first perceptions of sound as originating wholly within himself. But in process of time we learn not only to refer the origin of sounds to a position above or below, to the right or left; but to connect each particular sound with a particular external cause, referring one to a bell as its appropriate external cause, another to a flute, another to a trumpet.

## §. 41. Connection of hearing with language.

One of the greatest benefits of the sense of hearing is, that, in consequence of it, we are enabled to hold intercourse with each other by means of spoken language, without which the advancement of the human mind must have inevitably been very limited.

It is by means of speech, that we express our feelings to the little company of our neighbours and our own family; and without it this pleasant and cheering intercourse must be almost entirely suspended. Not limited in its beneficial results to families and neighbourhoods, it has been made the medium of the transmission of thought from age to age, from generation to generation. So that in one age has been concentrated the result of all the researches, the combination of the wisdom of all the preceding.

"There is without all doubt," it has been observed, "a chain of the thoughts of human kind, from the origin of the world down to the moment at which we exist, a chain not less universal than that of the generation of every being, that lives. Ages have exerted their influence on ages; nations on nations; truths on errors; errors on truths."

Whether oral language be an invention of man, or a power bestowed upon him by his Creator and coeval with the human race, the ear must in either case have been the primary recipient;—the faculty of speech so necessary and so beneficial could not have existed without the sense of hearing.

## §. 42. Of the sense and the perceptions of touch.

The principal organ of touch is the hand. This part of our frame is composed of various articulations, that by the aid of the muscles are easily moveable, so that it can adapt itself readily to the various changes of form in the objects, to which it is applied.

The senses, which have been already mentioned, are more simple and uniform in their results, than that of the touch. By the ear we have a perception of sounds, or that sensation, which we denominate hearing. By the palate we have a knowledge of tastes, and by the sense of smelling

we become acquainted with the odours of bodies. The knowledge, which is directly acquired by all these senses, is limited to the qualities, which have been mentioned. By the sense of touch, on the contrary, we become acquainted not with one merely, but with a variety of qualities, such as the following, heat and cold, hardness and softness, roughness and smoothness, figure, solidity, motion, and extension.

§. 43. The idea of externality or outness suggested by the sense of touch:

If man were possessed of the sense of smell alone, it would be found, that the earliest elements of his knowledge consisted exclusively in sensations of odours. According, however, as these sensations were agreeable or disagreeable, he would acquire the additional ideas of pleasure and pain. And having experienced pleasure and pain, we may suppose, that this would subsequently give rise to the notions of desire and aversion. But if he had no other sense, all these feelings would seem to him to be internal, to be mere emanations from the soul itself; and he would be incapable of referring them to an external cause.

If he were possessed of the sense of hearing alone, the result would be similar; his existence would then seem to consist of harmony, as in the other case it would be made up of fragrance; nor indeed by the aid merely of both these senses combined, would he be able to form an idea of externality or outness.

But this idea is a most important one; it is the connecting thought, which introduces us to an acquaintance with a new form of existence, different from that interior existence, which we variously call by the names, spirit, mind, or soul. This idea first arises in the mind from the sense of touch.

All the senses, not excluding the smell and the taste, which are the least important in a mere intellectual point of view, have their share in bringing the mind into action; they are the primitive sources of thought and of emotion. The mind becomes, in consequence of the senses, full of

activity, although its acts are at first wholly internal. It compares, abstracts, reasons, chooses, wills; and meeting with no obstacle, it finds every thing easy, and a source of pleasure. But after a time it chooses to move the limbs in this direction or that; it chooses to press the hand through this bright, or that fragrant body; and its volition is checked, its desire is counteracted, the wonted series of thoughts is disturbed and broken; but without even the interval of a momentary pause of wonder, there arises vividly in the soul a new thought, a new feeling, which we call the idea of externality or outness. It is the sense of touch, which impinges upon the obstacle, that is thrown across the direction of our volition; and none other of the senses possesses this power. It thus breaks the connection and tendency of thought, and gives rise to a new idea. And this idea, arising without doubt under these circumstances, becomes associated with all those notions, which we subsequently form of matter.

§. 44. Of the benefits of the sense of sight.

Of those instruments of perception, with which a benevolent Providence has furnished us, a high rank must be given to the sense of seeing. If we were restricted in the process of acquiring knowledge to the informations of the touch merely, how many embarrassments would attend our progress and how slow it would prove! Having never possessed sight it would be many years, before the most acute and active person could form an idea of a mountain or even of a large edifice. But by the additional help of the sense of seeing, he not only observes the figure of large buildings, but is in a moment possessed of all the beauties of a wide and variegated landscape.

It does not fall within our plan to give a minute description of the eye, which belongs rather to the anatomist, but such a description, with a statement of the uses of the different parts of the organ, must be to a candid and reflecting mind a most powerful argument in proof of the existence and goodness of the Supreme Being. How wonderful among other things is the adaptation of the rays of

light to the eye ! If those minute particles, which come to us with such inconceivable rapidity from all things around us, were not coloured, we should be deprived of much of that high satisfaction, which we now take, in beholding surrounding objects ; and if they were not of a texture so extremely small, they would cause much pain to the organ of vision.

§. 45. Statement of the mode or process in visual perception.

In the process of vision, the rays of light, coming from various objects and in various directions, strike in the first place on the pellucid or transparent part of the ball of the eye.

If they were to continue passing on precisely in the same direction, they would produce merely one mingled and indistinct expanse of colour.

In the progress through the chrystalline humour, they are refracted or bent from their former direction and distributed to certain focal points on the retina, which is a white, fibrous expansion of the optic nerve.

The rays of light, coming from objects in the field of vision, whether it be more or less extensive, as soon as they have been distributed on their distinct portions of the retina, and have formed an image there, are immediately followed by the sensation or perception, which is termed sight.

The image which is pictured on the retina, is the last step, which we are able to designate in the material part of the process in visual perception ; the mental state follows, but it is not in our power to trace, even in the smallest degree, any physical connection between the optical image and the corresponding state of the mind.

All that we can say in this case is, that we suppose them to hold to each other the relation of antecedent and consequent by an ultimate law of our constitution.

§. 46. Of the connection which the brain has with perception.

It was an odd opinion, which once widely prevailed, that our ideas are inscribed in marks or traces in the

medullary substance of the brain. "So soon as the soul (says Malebranche in his Search after Truth) receives some new ideas, it imprints new traces in the brain, and so soon as the object produces new traces, the soul receives new ideas."

This leads us to observe, without taking up time in remarking on this now exploded opinion, that the brain is a prominent organ in the material part of the process of sensation and of external perception. The sensorial substance, as it exists in the nerves, excepting the coat, in which it is enveloped, is the same as in the brain, being of the same soft and partially fibrous texture and in perfect continuity with it. When the brain is in an unsound state, or has been in any way injured, both the external impression and the consequent perception are very imperfect. Also if the nerve, which is a supposed continuation of the brain, be injured, or if its continuity be disturbed by the pressure of a tight ligature, the effect is the same; both the external impression and the perception are either destroyed or are imperfect.

The brain, therefore, and the nerves in continuity with it constitute the *sensorial organ*, which in the subordinate organs of taste, of smell, of sight, of touch, and of hearing, presents itself under different modifications to external objects. On this organ, the *sensorial*, as thus explained, an impression must be made, before there can be perception.

An impression, for instance, is made on that part of the sensorial organ called the auditory nerve, and a state of mind immediately succeeds, which is termed the sensation, or the perception of sound.

An impression is made by the rays of light on that expansion of the optic nerve, which forms what is termed the *RETINA*, and the intellectual principle is immediately brought into that new position, which is termed visual perception.

The hand is impressed on a body of an uneven and rough surface, and immediately consequent on this impres-

sion, is that state of mind, which is termed a sensation or perception of roughness.

§. 47. Impressions on the senses and perceptions are antecedents and consequents.

In all these cases, as we have already remarked in respect to sight in particular, the impression made on the organ of sense is the antecedent, the mental perception is the consequent; and we are utterly unable, further than the mere fact of precedence and sequence, to trace any connection between them. But while we can see in instances of this description no necessary, no physical connection between the perception of the mind and the impression on the senses, we clearly discover the agency of the Supreme Being, who has appointed and sustains this connection, which is in itself arbitrary and conventional. We do indeed in common discourse speak of cause and effect, as if we could perceive how one follows another, but there is no other cause and effect in the physical world than that of antecedent and consequent; and the instances, which we thus name, are to be resolved into the independent and uncontrolled power of God. Although too frequently we do not behold Him, he is truly every where present, and his almighty power is unceasingly at work.

It is no matter whether His divine agency be considered mediate or immediate, direct or secondary. These terms are less adapted to the true nature of this agency, than to the feeble conceptions, which the human mind forms of it. If we cannot predicate time of the existence of the Supreme Being, we can no more predicate time of his physical acts, except it be relatively to the limited conceptions of the human intellect. The agency of God is one thing; the mode of it is another. In the mode of his agency, he has kindly conformed himself to the weakness of those understandings, which are called upon to behold and adore it. But its nature is the same, and equally efficient and worthy of our admiration, whenever and however it be exhibited; whether it be employed in what may be termed the secondary labour of gilding the wing

of an insect, or in the original and creative effort of kindling the burning fountains of the sun.

§. 48. Of the estimation of distances by sight.

By the distance of objects, when we use the term in reference to ourselves, we mean the space, which is interposed between those objects and our own position. It might be objected, that space interposed is only a synonymous expression for the thing to be defined. Nevertheless, no one can be supposed to be ignorant of what is meant. Even blind men have a notion of distance, and can measure it by the touch, or by walking forward until they meet the distant object.

The perception of distance by the sight is an acquired and not an original perception; although the latter was universally supposed to be the fact, until comparatively a recent period.

All objects in the first instance appear to touch the eye.

Our experience has corrected so many of the representations of the senses before the period, which we are yet able to retrace by the memory, that we cannot prove this by a reference to our own childhood and infancy. It appears, however, from the statement of the cases of persons born blind on the sudden restoration of their sight.

"When he first saw, (says Cheselden, the anatomist, when giving an account of a young man, whom he had restored to sight by couching for the cataract,) he was so far from making any judgment about distances, that he thought all objects touched his eyes, as he expressed it, as what he felt, did his skin; and thought no objects so agreeable as those, which were smooth and regular, although he could form no judgment of their shape, or guess what it was in any object, that was pleasing to him."

This anatomist has further informed us, that he has brought to sight several others, who had no remembrance of ever having seen; and that they all gave the same account of their learning to see, as they called it, as the young man already mentioned, although not in so many



particulars; and that they all had this in common, that having never had occasion to move their eyes, they knew not how to do it, and, at first, could not at all direct them to a particular object; but in time they acquired that faculty, though by slow degrees.

Blind persons, when at first restored to sight, are unable to estimate the distance of objects by that sense, but soon observing, that certain changes in the visible appearance of bodies always accompany a change of distance, they fall upon a method of estimating distance by the visible appearance. And it would no doubt be found, if it could be particularly examined into, that all mankind come to possess the power of estimating the distances of objects by sight in the same way. When a body is removed from us and placed at a considerable distance, it becomes smaller in its visible appearance, its colours are less lively, and its outlines less distinct; and we may expect to find a number of intermediate objects, more or fewer, as the distance may happen to be, showing themselves between the receding object and the spectator. And hence it is, that a certain visible appearance comes to be the sign of a certain distance.

Historical and landscape painters are enabled to turn these facts to great account in their delineations. By means of dimness of colour, indistinctness of outline, and the partial interposition of other objects, they are enabled apparently to throw back at a very considerable distance from the eye those objects, which they wish to appear remote. While other objects, that are intended to appear near, are painted vivid in colour, large in size, distinct in outline, and are separated from the eye of the spectator by few or no intermediate objects.

§. 49. Of the estimation of distance when unaided by intermediate objects.

As we depend in no small degree upon intermediate objects in forming our notions of distance, it results, that we are often much perplexed by the absence of such objects. Accordingly we find, that people frequently mis-

take, when they attempt to estimate by the eye the length or width of unoccupied plains and marshes, generally making the extent less than it really is. For the same reason they misjudge of the width of a river, estimating its width at half or three quarters of a mile at the most, when it is perhaps not less than double that distance. The same holds true of other bodies of water; and of all other things, which are seen by us in a horizontal position, and under similar circumstances.

We mistake in the same way also in estimating the height of steeples, and of other bodies, that are perpendicular, and not on a level with the eye, provided the height be considerable. As the upper parts of the steeple out-top the surrounding buildings, and there are no contiguous objects with which to compare it, any measurement taken by the eye must be inaccurate, but is generally less than the truth.

But it has been noticed, that a man on the top of a steeple appears smaller to those below, than the same man would seem to the same persons, and at the same distance on level ground. This does not disagree with the preceding statement; but then it is in part to be explained in this way.—As we have been in the habit of measuring distances by the eye, we can give a pretty near guess, whether a person be at an hundred feet distance, or more or less; and the mind immediately makes an allowance, and corrects the first visual representation so rapidly that we do not remember it. But having never been in the habit of measuring perpendicular distances, the mind is at a loss, and fails to make that correction, which it would very readily, and, as it were, intuitively make in the case of any objects on level ground. So that a man an hundred feet in the air appears to us smaller, than at the same removal from us on the earth.

The fixed stars, when viewed by the eye, all appear to be alike indefinitely and equally distant. Being scattered over the whole sky, they make every part of it seem like themselves at an indefinite and equal distance, and, therefore, contribute to give the whole sky the appearance of

the inside of a sphere. Moreover, the horizon seems to the eye to be further off than the zenith; because between us and the former there lie many things, as fields, hills, and waters, which we know to occupy a great space; whereas between us and the zenith there are no considerable things of known dimensions. And, therefore, the heavens appear like the segment of a sphere, and less than a hemisphere, in the centre of which we seem to stand. And the wider our prospect is, the greater will the sphere appear to be and the less the segment.

In connection with what has been said, we are led to make this further remark, that a change in the purity of the air will perplex in some measure those ideas of distance, which we receive from sight. Bishop Berkeley remarks while travelling in Italy and Sicily, he noticed, that cities and palaces, seen at a great distance, appeared nearer to him by several miles than they actually were. The cause of this he very correctly supposed to be the purity of the Italian and Sicilian air, which gave to objects at a distance a degree of brightness and distinctness, which in the less clear and pure atmosphere of his native country, could be observed only in those towns and separate edifices, which were near. At home he had learnt to estimate the distance of objects by their appearance; but his conclusions failed him, when they came to be applied to objects in countries, where the air was so much clearer.—And the same thing has been noticed by other travellers, who have been placed in the like circumstances.

§. 50. Of objects seen on the ocean, &c.

A vessel seen at sea by a person, who is not accustomed to the ocean, appears much nearer than it actually is, and on the same principles as already illustrated. In his previous observations of objects at a distance, he has commonly noticed a number of intermediate objects, interposed between the distant body and himself. It is probable the absence of such objects, that chiefly causes the deception, under which he labours in the present instance.

And this naturally leads to a remark on the power, which those who follow the sea are said to possess, of distinguishing objects at a distance. They not only judge of the distance better, but they are thought to see much farther than others. Frequently the experienced sailor will discover a vessel approaching in the edge of the horizon, and even be able to state the direction of her course and the number of her masts, while the land-man sees nothing of the kind; At least he thinks so. Perhaps, however, they both in many cases see the same small speck, but it speaks to them a very different language. To the sailor that mere speck is a vessel; the small breaks, which he discerns in it, distinctly convey to his mind the idea of sails and masts; he interprets the dim and diminished signs before him as certainly and as gladly, as one reads his mother tongue. But to the land-man, who has never been practised in this sort of interpretation, these signs are without signification; they are a foreign language, which conveys no meaning.

§. 51. Idea of extension not originally from sight.

We have seen, that our idea of distance is not derived originally from the sight, but from the touch. Our idea of extension has the same origin. As distance is the space interposed between one object and another, extension may be described as the distance between the parts of the same object, where in the intermediate parts there is a continuity of the same substance. And yet the true notion of extension, like that of distance, is better learnt from personal experience than from any form of words, which may be employed to convey it.

If a man, endued with sight, were to be fixed all his days in one place immoveably, and were deprived of the means of gaining any experience by the touch, that man could never, from the information of his own senses, receive any accurate knowledge of extension. But having learnt in time what appearance coloured and extended bodies make to the eye, he comes to learn from that appearance the extension of bodies, much the same as he es-

timates their distance from their appearance. Therefore, we rightly say, that this idea is originally from the sense of touch. An affection of the sense of touch is the occasion, on which the mind possesses it; and it is an idea of the sense of sight only by acquisition or experience.

And this statement leads us to the consideration of *magnitude* or limited extension, which is also estimated by the eye, although the power of thus measuring it, like that of measuring distances and extension, is not an original perception, but is acquired by the aid of the touch.

§. 52. Measurements of magnitude by the eye.

Magnitude is divided into two kinds, tangible and visible; the tangible magnitude being always the same, but the visible varying with the distance of the object. A man of six feet stature is always that height, whether he be a mile distant, or half a mile, or near at hand; the change of place making no change in his real or tangible magnitude. But the visible magnitude of this man may be six feet or not one foot, as we view him present with us, or at two miles distance; for his magnitude appears to our eye greater or less, according as he is more or less removed.

Of two objects equally distant or supposed to be equally distant, that, which has the greatest visible magnitude, is supposed to have the greatest tangible magnitude.

To a man bewildered in a mist, objects seem larger than the life, because their faint appearance conveys the idea of great distance, and an object at a considerable distance, which has the same visible magnitude with one near, the mind immediately concludes to be larger.

The sun and moon seem larger in the horizon than in the meridian, appearing then to be at the greatest distance, both because the horizon for a reason already given may seem more remote than the zenith, and particularly because there is necessarily a greater mass of atmosphere between the eye and those bodies when they are thus sit-

uated, than when they are in the meridian. In misty weather they appear unusually enlarged, when they are horizontal: And this is sometimes noticed to be the case, when the atmosphere is clear immediately around us; and may be owing to an accumulation of vapours and exhalations in some other place, through which the rays pass.

§. 53. Of the knowledge of the figure of bodies by the sight.

A solid body presents to the eye nothing but a certain disposition of colours and light. We may imagine ourselves to see the prominencies or cavities in such bodies, when in truth we see only the light or the shade, occasioned by them. This light and shade, however, we learn by experience to consider as the sign of a certain, solid figure.

A proof of the truth of this statement is, that a painter by carefully imitating the distribution of light and shade, which he sees in objects, will make his work very naturally and exactly represent, not only the general outline of a body, but its prominencies, depressions, and other irregularities. And yet his delineation, which by the distribution of light and shade gives such various representations, is on a smooth and plain surface.

It was a problem submitted by Mr. Molyneux to Mr. Locke, whether a blind man, who has learnt the difference between a cube and a sphere by the touch, can, on being suddenly restored to sight, distinguish between them, and tell, which is the sphere and which is the cube, by the aid of what may be called his *new* sense merely? And the answer of Mr. Locke was, that he cannot. The blind man knows what impressions the cube and sphere make on the organ of *touch* and by that sense is able to distinguish between them, but, as he is ignorant what impression they will make on the organ of sight, he is not able by the latter sense alone to tell, which is the round body, and which is the cubic.

It was remarked, that solid bodies present to the eye nothing but a certain disposition of light and colours.

It seems to follow from this, that the first idea, which will be conveyed to the mind on seeing a globe, will be that of a circle, variously shadowed with different degrees of light. This imperfect idea is corrected in this way. Combining the suggestions of the sense of touch with those of sight, we learn by greater experience what kind of appearance solid, convex bodies will make to us. That appearance becomes to the mind the sign of the presence of a globe; so that we have an idea of a round body by a very rapid mental correction, whereas the idea first conveyed to the mind is truly that of a plane, circular surface, on which there is a variety in the dispositions of light and shade. It is an evidence of the correctness of this statement, that in paintings plane surfaces, variously shaded, represent convex bodies, and with great truth and exactness.

It appears then, that distance, extension, magnitude and figure, are originally perceived, not by sight, but by touch. We do not judge of them by sight, until we have learnt by our experience, that certain visible appearances always accompany and signify certain distances, extensions, magnitudes, and figures. This knowledge we acquire at a very early period in life, so much so, that we lose in a great measure the memory both of its commencement and progress.

And yet many people can recollect the time, when they considered the sky to be a transparent and solid concave, resting on the tops of distant mountains. How different is this idea, which we receive from the sight, from what we find in our subsequent experience to be the fact!

§. 54. The senses reciprocally assist each other.

The errors and deficiencies of one sense are made up and corrected by the friendly presence and suggestions of another. And when any of the senses entirely fail, the others are proportionably quickened and improved.

A multitude of instances go to show to what extent this correction and this aid take place.

We will suppose, as an illustration, that, at an early

period of life, a person loses his sight. An effect on the sense of hearing and of touch is immediately perceived ; they are greatly improved.

The blind man cannot see his friend, but he knows, when he enters the room by the sound of his tread ; or if his hearing should lead him into error, he corrects his mistake by a grasp of the hand. He cannot see the large and heavy bodies, which happen in his way when he walks about, but he suspects their too great nearness to him in consequence of the increased resistance of the atmosphere.\* And a blind person, owing to the increased accuracy of the remaining senses, would be better trusted to go through the various apartments of a house, in the darkness of midnight, than one, possessed of the sense of seeing, but without any artificial light to assist him. It is stated on the authority of a Roman historian, that there was a blind man, who made it his employment to conduct merchants and other travellers through the sands and deserts of Arabia. This statement seems not to be improbable, when we recollect what is related in the transactions of the Manchester Society in England of John Metcalf, otherwise called Blind Jack. He became blind at an early

\* It is a singular circumstance, that something similar to what is here stated of the ability of blind men to discover the nearness or distance of objects by changes in the resistance of the atmosphere, has been noticed by the naturalist, Spallanzani, in respect to bats. He discovered, that bats when perfectly blinded and afterwards set at liberty, had the extraordinary faculty of guiding themselves through the most complicated windings of subterraneous passages, without striking against the walls, and that they avoided with great skill cords, branches of trees, and other obstacles, placed by design in their way.

This ability is probably owing to an extreme delicacy in the wing, which is of a very large size in proportion to that of the animal, and is covered with an exceedingly fine net-work of nerves. The bat, as it strikes the air with its wing, receives sensations of heat, cold, and resistance, and, in consequence, is enabled to avoid objects, which would otherwise obstruct its flight, apparently in the same way that blind persons perceive a door or a wall by a change in the temperature or in the resistance of the air.



period; but, notwithstanding, followed the profession of a waggoner and occasionally of a guide in intricate roads, during the night, or when the tracks were covered with snow. At length he became a projector and surveyor of highways in difficult and mountainous districts; an employment, for which one would naturally suppose a blind man to be but indifferently qualified. But he was found to answer all the expectations of his employers, and most of the roads over the peak in Derbyshire in England were altered by his directions. Says the person, who gives this account of Blind Jack, "I have several times met this man with the assistance only of a long staff traversing the roads, ascending precipices, exploring vallies, and investigating their several extents, forms, and situations, so as to answer his designs in the best manner." (Ed. Ency. Art. Blindness.)

This improvement of the remaining senses, when one of them is lost, is probably owing to the increased attention, which people then bestow upon the various and nicely distinguished suggestions, which they furnish. Nothing escapes them, and those dim perceptions, which were formerly almost unnoticed, now convey to them important information.

§. 55. Supposed feelings of a being called into existence in the full possession of his powers.

In the Natural History of the celebrated Buffon we have an account of the process, by which the use of the sight and of the other external senses is acquired. He invents a delightful recital, and puts it in the mouth of our first parent; and thus instructs us in the most abstruse subjects by an appeal to the imagination.

"Let us suppose (says he) a man newly brought into existence, whose body and organs are already perfectly formed, but who, awaking amidst the productions of Nature, is an utter stranger to every thing he perceives both from without, and from within. Of a man thus circumstanced what would be the first emotions, the first sensations, the first opinions? Were he himself to give us a detail of his

conceptions at this period, how would he express them? Might it not be in some measure as follows?

"Well do I recollect that joyful, anxious moment, when I first became conscious of my own existence. I knew not what I was, where I was, or whence I came. On opening my eyelids, what an addition to my surprise! The light of day, the azure vault of heaven, the verdure of the earth, the chrystal of the waters, all employed, all animated, and filled me with inexpressible delight."

"At first, I imagined that all those objects were within me, and formed a part of myself. Impressed with this idea, I turned my eyes towards the sun, whose splendour instantly dazzled and over-powered me. Involuntarily I closed my eyelids, though not without a slight sensation of pain; and, during this short interval of darkness, I imagined that I was about to sink into nothing."

"Full of affliction and astonishment, I had begun to ponder on this great change, when, listening, I heard a variety of sounds. The whistling of the wind, and the melody of the grove, formed a concert, of which the soft impression pervaded the inmost recesses of my soul. I continued to listen; nor could I banish the persuasion, that all this music was actually within me."

"So much was I engrossed with this new kind of existence, that I entirely forgot the light, that other part of my being, which I had known the first, till again I had opened my eyes. What joy to find myself once more in possession of so many brilliant objects! The present pleasure surpassed the former, and for a time suspended the charming effect of sounds."

"I turned my eyes upon a thousand different objects. These, which I still considered as a part of myself, I soon found that I could lose, and restore, at pleasure; and with a repetition of this new power I continued to amuse myself."

"I had begun to see without emotion, and to hear without confusion, when a light breeze, of which the freshness communicated a new sensation of pleasure, wafted its per-

fumes to me, and excited in me a kind of additional self-love."

"Agitated by all these different sensations, and impelled by the various pleasures of my new existence, I instantly arose, and in arising perceived myself moved along, as by if by some unknown, some hidden power."

"Hardly had I advanced one step, when the novelty of my situation rendered me, as it were, immoveable. My surprise returned; for I supposed that all the objects around me were in motion; to them I ascribed that agitation, which I had myself produced by changing place; and the whole creation seemed once more to be in disorder."

"I carried my hand to my head; I touched my forehead; I felt my whole frame. Then it was that I first conceived my hand to be the principal organ of my existence. All its informations were so distinct, so perfect, and so superior to what I had experienced from the other senses, that I employed myself for some time in repeating its enjoyments. Every part of my body, which I touched with my hand, seemed to touch my hand in turn, and actually gave back sensation for sensation."

"It was not long before I perceived that this faculty was expanded over my whole frame and before I began to discover the limits of my existence, which, at first, I had supposed of an immense extent, and diffused over all the objects I saw."

"Upon casting my eyes upon my body, and surveying my own form I conceived it to be of a size so enormous, that all the objects, which had hitherto struck my eyes, seemed to be, in comparison, as so many luminous particles. I gazed upon my person with pleasure. I examined the formation of my hand, and all its motions; and the former appeared to me more or less large, in proportion as it was more or less distant from my eyes. On bringing it very near, it concealed, I found, almost every other object from my sight."

"I began soon, however, to suspect that there was some fallacy in the sensation I experienced from the eye; and I therefore resolved to depend, for information, upon the

touch, which as yet had never deceived me. This precaution was highly serviceable. I renewed my motions, and walked forward with my face turned towards the heavens. Happening to strike lightly against a palm tree, I was dismayed, and laid my hand, though not without fear, upon this extraneous body; for extraneous I conceived it to be, as it did not return sensation for sensation, as my former feelings had done. Now it was that, for the first time, I perceived there was something external, something which did not form an actual part of my own existence."

"From this new discovery I concluded, that I ought to form my opinion with respect to external objects, in the same manner as I had done with respect to the parts of my body. I resolved, therefore, to feel whatever I saw; and, vainly attempting to touch the sun, I stretched forth my arms, and found nothing but an airy vacuum. At every effort I made, as each object appeared to me equally near, from one fit of surprise I fell into another; nor was it till after an infinite number of trials, that I was enabled to use the eye as a guide to the hand, and that I perceived there were some objects more remote from me than others."

"Amazed and mortified at the uncertainty of my state, and at the endless delusions to which I seemed to be subjected, the more I reflected, the more I was perplexed. Fatigued and oppressed with thought, I seated myself beneath a tree, loaded with delicious fruit within my reach. On stretching forth my arm, the fruit instantly separated from the branches, and I seized it. To grasp in my hand an entire substance, which formed no part of myself, pleased me. When I held it up, its weight, though in itself trivial, seemed, however, like an animated impulse, to incline it to the earth. In conquering this resistance I found another, and a greater pleasure."

"I held the fruit near my eye, and I considered its form, and its colours. Its fragrance prompted me to carry it nearer and nearer, and with eagerness did I inhale that fragrance. The perfume invited my sense of tasting, which I found to be superior to that of smelling. What

savour, what novelty of sensation, did I now experience. Nothing could be more exquisite. What before had been pleasure, was now heightened into luxury. The power of tasting gave me the idea of possession. I imagined that the substance of this fruit had become a part of my own substance, and that I was impowered to transform things without me at will."

"Charmed with the idea of this new power, and incited by the sensations, I had already experienced, I continued to pluck the fruit; nor did I think any labour too great for the satisfaction of my taste. At length, however, an agreeable languor stealing upon my senses, my limbs became heavy, and my soul seemed to lose its activity. My sensations, no longer vivid and distinct, presented to me only feeble and irregular images. In the instant, as it were, my eyes became useless, closed; and my head, no longer borne up by the strength of the muscles, sunk back, and found a support upon the verdant turf beneath me."

§. 56. Of the senses considered as the foundation of belief and knowledge.

It has already been remarked, that the senses are one source of belief and knowledge. This is allowedly one of those primary truths, which we continually receive as the necessary conditions of opinion, reasoning, and action. The conduct of men, as we daily and constantly behold it, warrants the reception of it as such. We are, therefore, led to observe in connection with the views hitherto presented in this chapter, that the contrary opinion, which has been maintained by a few persons, is founded on an error, which can now be easily understood and illustrated. The error, to which we allude, is this; **A MISTAKEN OPINION AS TO THE APPROPRIATE FUNCTIONS OF EACH OF THE SENSES.**

Look at each of the senses separately, and see the truth of this remark. It is the appropriate business of the sense of smelling to give us ideas of odours. We may be led to look for the cause of these new sensations, but nothing more. We do not learn from it what that cause is—

It is not pretended, that this sense alone can give us the notion of an external, odoriferous body. The sense of taste is equally limited with that of smell, but both, as far as they go, are grounds of knowledge, and do not deceive. It might no doubt be said, that they may be diseased, and thus mislead us; but the remarks of this section go on the supposition, that the senses are in a sound state.—When we come to the sense of hearing, we find, that the perceptions of sound have in part an acquired character. The reference of a particular sound to a particular external cause always implies the exercise of the sense of touch, also of that principle of the mind, which is termed association. But hearing, when in a sound state, is always a ground of belief and knowledge, as far as the mere sensation of sound is concerned; and so far can be most certainly trusted.

The sense of sight, against which the heaviest complaints have been made by the Sceptics, makes us acquainted with the colours of bodies. To say, therefore, that it misleads us in respect to solidity, extension, size, direction, or distance, is but very little, or rather nothing to the purpose. These are acquired perceptions, and have their origin in another sense, that of touch.

And hence on the question, Whether our senses mislead us? we are to consider, to which of the senses the particular ideas under review appropriately belong. And also in our search after truth, it becomes us to call in the aid of all the senses, and not to consult one to the entire omission of the others. They all make parts of one great and wonderful system, and cannot be safely separated. When they are in a sound state, when the ideas, of which they are the origin, are properly discriminated, and further, when the intimations of one sense are aided by those of another and by the guidance of the reasoning power, which clearly ought not to be excluded, we may then confidently expect to be led by them into the truth, so far as our Creator designed, that it should be made known to us.

## CHAPTER FIFTH.

### INTERNAL ORIGIN OF THOUGHT.

§. 58. The senses are not the only source of our ideas.

**T**HUS far we have traced the history of the mind; and perhaps with some degree of satisfaction. With cautious endeavours not to trespass upon those limits, which our Creator himself has set to our inquiries, we have found the mind awakening from its inactivity, and testing the untried strength of its powers. A fruitful subject has been opened before us; but thus far, it is to be remembered, we have seen the mind unfolding its susceptibilities only in connection with external impressions on the senses. A new view is to be taken of it.

“The natural progress of all true learning (says the author of *Hermes*) is from sense to intellect.” Beginning with the senses, and first considering the ideas which we there receive, we are next to enter into the mind itself, and shall there discover a new and prolific source of knowledge. In thus doing, we tread, as we proposed to do, in the steps of Locke, whose general doctrine undoubtedly is, that a part of our ideas may be traced to the senses, and that the origin of others is to be sought in the intellect itself.

“The other fountain, (says Locke,) from which experience furnisheth the understanding with ideas, is the perception of the operations of our own minds within us, as it is employed about the ideas it has got; which operations, when the soul comes to *reflect on* and consider, do furnish the understanding with another set of ideas, which

could not be had from things without ; and such are *perception, thinking, doubting, believing, reasoning, knowing, willing*, and all the different actings of our own minds, which, we being conscious of, and observing in ourselves, do from these receive into our understandings ideas as distinct, as we do from bodies affecting our senses. This source of ideas every man has wholly in himself : And though it be not sense, *as having nothing to do with external objects*, yet it is very like it, and might properly enough be called *internal sense*. But as I call the other SENSATION, so I call this REFLECTION ; the ideas it affords being such only as the mind gets by *reflecting* on its own operations within itself."

§. 59. The great sources of our knowledge are twofold, external and internal.

The earliest sources or occasions of our knowledge, therefore, are two ; (1) The affections of our senses by means of external objects ; (2) The various operations of the mind itself, of which we are conscious. In other words, they are the world without and the world within ; the external creation, between which and our bodily senses Providence has instituted a common and reciprocal adaptation, and the internal, mental creation, which no sooner commences its various and appropriate exercises, than we are furnished with another series of ideas, which never could have been received from the senses alone. The notions, which we receive from these two sources, are concisely known in Locke's Philosophy, as ideas of SENSATION and of REFLECTION. Nor does there seem to be any good reason, when its precise import is understood, why this phraseology, which is sanctioned by long use and respectable names, should not continue to be employed.

This great and characteristic point in the history of our intellectual experiences is fully recognized by a multitude of inquirers into this subject in different countries ; and among others in certain writers on the Philosophy of the Mind, who have from time to time made their appearance among the Germans. This was clearly the opinion of the famous Kant, whatever degree of uncertainty and doubt



is found to rest upon other articles of his metaphysic system. He evidently gives us to understand, that the mental operations themselves, although the senses are the first occasions of those operations, furnish a new set of notions, which cannot directly be traced to any thing external. A somewhat peculiar phraseology, however, has been employed by these writers, which it is of some importance to retain in mind. Those ideas, which exist in consequence of some external affection of the senses, are called by them **OBJECTIVE**; those, which spring into existence solely in consequence of the mere nature and workings of the intellect, are termed **SUBJECTIVE**; the source of the one class being the objects without, and of the other the sentient principle within.\* Such in brief is the theory, which will be found to be supported by facts which claims to be true; and which opens up many new and ennobling views of the constitution and destiny of human nature.

\*NOTE. The two short extracts following go to confirm what is above stated.—Der Zeit nach geht alle Erkenntnis in uns vor der Erfahrung vorher, und in dieser fängt alle an. Wenn aber gleich alle unsere Erkenntnis mit der Erfahrung anhebt, so entspringt sie darum doch nicht eben alle aus der Erfahrung. Denn es könne wohl seyn, dass selbst unsere Erfahrungserkenntnis ein Zusammengesetztes aus dem sey, was wir durch Eindrücke empfangen, und dem, was unser eigenes Erkenntnisvermögen, (durch sinnliche Eindrücke bloß veranlasst,) aus sich selbst hergiebt, welchen Zusatz wir von jenem Grundstoffe nicht eher unterscheiden, als bei lange Übung uns darauf aufmerksam, und zur Absonderung desselben geschickt gemacht hat. *Kant's Critik der reinen Vernunft. Einleitung, I.*

On appelle, dans la philosophie Allemande, *idees subjectives* celles que naissent de la nature de notre intelligence et de ses facultés, et *idees objectives* toutes celles que sont excitées par les sensations. *Mad. de Staël, P. Allemagne, tom. 3.*

§. 60. Writers who have objected to this twofold origin of our knowledge.

But it ought not to pass unnoticed, that there have been writers, who have objected to this twofold origin of our knowledge. It was the opinion of Hobbes, who preceded Locke, and was not without merit as a metaphysician, that all our knowledge might be traced to the senses, and that no other source need be sought. This was the opinion of Gassendi, and still later of Condillac, who supported it at length. They maintained, that we have no simple ideas, but such as exist in the mind directly by means of the senses. They further contended, that all those of a complex nature are made up of these simple ideas, and consequently that they may be considered a sort of transformed sensations.—“If we consider (says Condillac) that to remember, to compare, to judge, to distinguish, to imagine, to be astonished, to have abstract ideas, to have ideas of number and duration, to know truths, whether general or particular, are but so many modes of being attentive; that to have passions, to love, to hate, to hope, to fear, to will, are but so many different modes of desire; and that *attention*, in the one case, and *desire*, in the other case, of which all these feelings are modes, are themselves, in their origin, nothing more than modes of sensation, we cannot but conclude that SENSATION involves in itself all the faculties of the soul.”

This sentence in its evident meaning, and as it is understood both by its author and his commentators, is clearly at variance with the doctrine of Locke, and entirely cuts off what has been variously termed the internal, reflex, or subjective source of our knowledge. According to this doctrine every thing may be traced back to the senses, not merely as its occasion but as its direct cause; every thing becomes material; we are utterly unable to form a conception even of the glorious Deity himself, except under the character of a sagacious and venerable old man. And in the same way every other idea, however spiritual and whatever it may relate to, must be capable of being followed back to some archetype in outward,

material existences.—It is undoubtedly the tendency of this system to degrade the mind ; not only to limit the range, but to depress the character of its powers. The propriety of receiving it, however, does not perhaps so much depend upon its tendency, as upon the direct evidence which may be brought in its support, in which it is found to be utterly deficient.

§. 61. Of what can truly be ascribed to the senses and what not.

In order to have a correct understanding of the point before us, we briefly revert to the nature of the soul itself. Granting the reality of its existence, we were led to see in the first place, that a distinction might with good reason be drawn between the soul and its thoughts. It is true, that men become acquainted with the soul by means of its thoughts ; but these latter can by no means be considered necessary to the soul's existence, except relatively to the human mind. It is because the soul would appear to us to have no existence, were it not for its thoughts or its modifications, that we are so prone to identify the one with the other.

It appeared also, in the second place, that there are no innate or connatural ideas ; for these were held by the supporters of that doctrine to be coetaneous with the existence of the soul, and therefore might, and would exist independently of any outward affection of the senses.—But thought being neither the essential existence of the soul, nor coetaneous with that existence, nothing is more natural than to inquire, When and where our ideas have their origin ? And when we have gone thus far, we rely upon the general experience and testimony of mankind, that their origin is immediately subsequent to some affection of those bodily organs, which we call the senses. In other words, were it not for impressions on the senses which may be traced to objects external to them, our mental capabilities, whatever they may be, would always have remained folded up, and in a state of fruitless inaction.

Hence the process, which is implied in the perception of external things, or what is commonly termed by Mr

*Locke's sensation*, may justly be considered the occasion or the introductory step to all our knowledge. But it does not follow from this, nor is it by any means true, that the whole amount of it in its ultimate progress is to be ascribed directly to the same source. All that can be said with truth, is, that the mind receives the earliest part of its ideas by means of the senses, and that, in consequence of having received these elementary thoughts, all its powers become rapidly and fully operative.

And here we come to the second great source of knowledge. The powers of the mind being thus fairly brought into exercise, its various operations then furnish us with another set of ideas, which, by way of distinguishing them from those received through the direct mediation of the senses, may be called subjective ideas, or more commonly ideas of reflection. These two sources of our thoughts, however they may have been confounded by the writers above alluded to, are entirely distinct. The ideas, which arise from the fact of the previous existence of certain mental operations, could not have been suggested by any thing, which takes place in the external world, independently of those operations. Of this last class, some instances, with illustrations of the same, are now to be mentioned.

§. 62. Instances of notions, which have an internal origin.

Among other ideas, which are to be ascribed to the second great source, are those, expressed by the terms, *thinking, doubting, believing, and certainty*.—It is a matter of internal observation, (that is, of consciousness or of reflection, which are synonymous with internal observation,) that the mind does not, and cannot for any length of time remain inactive. Hence there is occasion given for the origin of that idea, which we denominate *THINKING*. The notion, which we thus call, is framed by the mind under these circumstances; the name is given, and nobody is ignorant as to what is meant by it. But then it is to be marked that its origin is wholly internal; it is to be ascribed to consciousness or reflection no less than the

powers. We live; we move from object to object; we compare together the various subjects of our perceptions we extend our thoughts to far removed parts of the universe; and thus there is occasion given for the origin of this deeply grounded, but mysterious thought. Although every body has it, nobody can tell what it is; and yet we sometimes attempt to give a vague and rather inconsistent description of it. We justly regard it as something, which is neither seen nor touched; we say of it that it is implied in the perception of every external object, but that it is of a quality of none; that it is no where and every where; that it is illimitable, necessarily existent, and indestructible.

Another of this class is the idea of SUCCESSION.—It is not derived from either of the two great sources to the exclusion of the other. It is difficult to fix upon any distinct and separate occasion as its origin. It appears in the mind not at once, but gradually, as the result of all we see without, of all we feel within. We see a thousand changes in external objects, the removal of one object, and the supply of its place by another. And thus we form, or rather the unalterable tendencies of our nature, form the notion, which we term SUCCESSION. But hitherto it is an imperfect one.—We then look within ourselves; we are conscious of one state of mind, and another, and another; and again we have the idea of succession. Thus by combining the light, which is thrown from the internal as well as the external source of our knowledge, the indistinctness, which rested upon it, is removed; and it thenceforth becomes one of the well defined and important elements of our intellectual furniture.—A similar account is to be given of various other ideas, such as existence, unity, identity, and power. The latter in particular, on account of its importance as an element of our knowledge, requires a separate consideration.

#### §. 65. Origin of our idea of power.

The idea of power is sometimes suggested to us from the senses, or what takes place in the external world; and sometimes from our mental operations or rather from the

effects, which we observe to follow certain mental acts.

We find, by way of illustrating our meaning, that we are able by a mere volition to move several parts of our bodies, to go from place to place, and to do other things similar. We observe also, that physical bodies, external to ourselves, are able to produce certain effects, one on another, and hence there is suggested to us this idea.

But to be more explicit and to illustrate this statement by some instances, let it be observed, that the idea of power connects itself closely with all cases of cause and effect ; and we become furnished with this idea by consulting such instances, whether they involve both mind and matter, or only material existences.

A cause is that, which immediately and always, in similar circumstances, is followed by a certain change ; the change being the sequence or effect.

For example, fire and the melting of metals may be considered as standing to each other in the relation of cause and effect, or of antecedence and sequence ; but although it be admitted to be true, that we know nothing more than the mere fact that one precedes and the other follows, yet we at once and as it were of necessity have the idea of power.—Again, we learn, that the loadstone has the quality of drawing iron, but all we can properly understand from this statement, is, that when the loadstone is made to approach the iron, the iron moves ; still we leave it to any one to say, Whether this be not an occasion, on which we have the idea of power ? It is the same in other cases, where material bodies, placed in certain circumstances, are constantly followed by changes in other bodies ; we find every such instance an occasion of that thought or notion, which we term power.

But let us in particular reflect a moment on those instances, where the antecedent to the effect produced, is mind, is some intellectual operation or existence.

We exercise that desire or choice, to which we give the name of volition, and, immediately consequent on that volition, there is a motion of the hand.

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## CHAPTER SIXTH.

### NATURE AND CLASSIFICATION OF SIMPLE IDEAS.

#### §. 66. Division of ideas as they are more or less complex.

Having considered and classed our ideas according to the occasions of their origin, we are next to consider them in another view, viz, according as they are more or less complex. When we regard them in this point of view, we cannot fail to discover readily a foundation laid for a new arrangement, which is in many respects important. Indeed every classification, which is truly founded in nature, is attended with some good results, because among other things it helps us to form an opinion more accurately as to the general limits of our knowledge. The classification, which is now proposed to be made, will aid also in framing an opinion in respect to the character of the elementary materials, of which that knowledge is composed.

In looking at our thoughts, as they continually pass under the review of our internal observation, we find that they are not of equal value. One thought or state of mind is found to be virtually equal to many others. Hence we are led to make a general division of the whole body of our mental affections into two kinds, viz. Simple and Compound. — Simple ideas are so called, since we know not, that they are in any degree compounded by being made of other thoughts, or that they can be resolved into any more elementary. This class then naturally arrests attention first, and forms the subject of the present treatise.



§ 6. ~~Answer to~~ determining what are simple ideas.

But no inquiry may be proposed here. In what way we determine whether an idea be simple or compound. How we know that one state of mind is composed of several equivalent to two or more other states. And that this is not the fact in other instances. Therefore in this reasonable inquiry, we lay down the positive principle, THAT NO SIMPLE IDEA IS SUSCEPTIBLE OF DEFINITION.

There is probably no principle in Intellectual Philosophy better settled than this. And consequently when we find after proper examination, that an idea can be resolved into others, that it cannot be defined, the presumption is, that it is simple. The only way, in which a simple idea can be made clearer by means of words, is by a professed definition, but by a mere statement of circumstances, as far as possible, under which it exists. And this we have sometimes done, but nothing further.

If, therefore, any should complain of want of clearness and profess not to understand what is meant by the terms extension, solidity, heat, cold, red, blue, sweet, unity, &c. or other names of simple ideas, we know not, that anything can be done to clear up that mental obscurity, which they labour, but merely to refer them to their senses to their own personal experience, as the only structure, from whom they will be likely to receive tolerable satisfaction.

§ 68. Futility of the definitions of the Schools.

It is a well known and very serious mistake of Schoolmen, that they undertook to give a definition of ideas of this kind. This course evidently tended to disturb and weaken the foundations of all reasoning and knowledge. The folly of it probably cannot be more strikingly shown than by referring to some instances, which are to be found in their writings. Among numerous other abortive attempts of this sort, they have given us a definition of motion, usually and justly classed as one of our simple

states of the mind. It was defined by the Schoolmen *ACTUS ENTIS IN POTENTIA QUATENUS IN POTENTIA*, the act of a being in power as far forth as in power. This, instead of making our idea of motion clearer than it was before, is altogether unintelligible.—At a later period it has also been defined a passage from one place to another. To this definition there is this objection, that passage is synonymous with motion, and that it amounts to no more than to say, that motion is motion from one place to another.

Every person is supposed to understand the meaning of the word, *light*. The Schoolmen, in order to render what was already perfectly well understood, more clear and easy to the comprehension of people, defined it *THE ACT OF PERSPICUOUS AS FAR FORTH AS PERSPICUOUS*. This definition is equally futile with either of the foregoing. If it should be stated to a blind man, who had never possessed the faculty of sight, it is very evident, that he would derive no information from it.

These instances among numerous others show the folly of such attempts; sufficiently evincing that they will tend to perplex rather than advance knowledge. They teach the mind to look inward upon itself, and to rest satisfied with its own experiences.

§ 69. From the nature of the case some ideas must be unsusceptible of definition.

And indeed the very nature of defining will of itself hardly fail to suggest, that there are limits, beyond which it is utterly inapplicable; and which, therefore, ought not to have been disregarded.—But what is to be understood by defining? Certainly not the mere use of synonymous words, although this has often been called by that name. It is expected in defining, and is implied in the meaning of the term itself, that the subject will be made clearer by it, but this is not ordinarily done by the use of synonymous expressions.

In every legitimate definition, the idea, which is to be defined, is to be separated, as far as may be thought necessary, into its subordinate parts; and these parts

are to be presented to the mind for its examination, instead of the original notion, into which they enter. This process must be gone through in every instance of accurate defining; and it is not easy to see, in any case, how it can well consist.

It is true, that we employ a variety of words, (and synonymous words,) in every such case; but these are merely the representatives of ideas. If, therefore, we define ideas by employing other ideas, we must come at last meeting at last with such as shall be ultimate, and reject all verbal explanation. We shall not fail to find some, which it will be impossible to analyse into subordinate parts. It will accordingly be impossible to aid the mind by bringing up other ideas, which are in the least clearer than those, which are properly defined. These last will be among those early notions of thought, which do not stand in need of the assistance of words, inasmuch as they are the offspring of nature herself.—And it is such ideas we distinguish by calling them simple.

#### §. 70. Division of our simple ideas.

Mr. Locke, having reference to the mode, in which our simple ideas are received into the mind, has divided them into the four following classes;

(1) 'Those, which are received by one sense merely;  
(2) 'Those, which are received from more than one sense;

(3) 'Those, which are received from reflection (or observation of what takes place in our minds);

(4) 'Those, which are received by reflection, and enter into the mind also at other times, in various ways, by sensation; or which in some instances are received by sensation and reflection combined, and not separately, at some occasions of the origin of the simple idea of power.

And this seems to be the most natural division, which can be made, and, therefore, is very well fitted to be kept in memory the history of our early notions.

## §. 71. Of simple ideas from one sense only.

To the class of simple ideas received from one sense only, belong the varieties of colour, such as red, white, yellow, green, &c., which are received by the sense of sight. To this class also belong all the varieties of sound, which are received by the sense of hearing; also the diversities of taste, received from the sense of taste.

The ideas of the sense of hearing do not belong to the sense of sight, nor those of sight to the sense of hearing; and this is so obvious, that it is needless to attempt to prove, how clearly the origin of the one is distinguished from that of the other set of ideas.

It may be remarked here, that not all our simple ideas, which have their origin in the senses, have names. Only the prominent distinctions are thus marked, while there are many diversities in the sensations of touch, taste, vision, and of the other senses, which are not.

## §. 72. Of simple ideas from more than one sense.

There are other simple ideas, such as extension, figure, and motion, which are to be considered, according to this classification, as derived from more than one sense; viz., from the senses of touch and sight. We perceive the extension of a body originally by the touch, but subsequently, when experience has given to the sense of sight its full power, are informed of it by the sight also. Although we here refer it to two of the senses, it is not to be forgotten, that it is with one merely an acquired, and with the other an original perception. The sight acquires the power of estimating extension at so early a period that, for all practical purposes, it is much the same, as if it were original; and hence it seems not improper to retain the common arrangement, which refers it to more than one sense.—Similar remarks apply to figure and motion.

As soon as we have learnt what significancy to attach to our visual perceptions, a subject, which was remarked upon in the fourth chapter, we have an idea of a statue by the sight and at once perceive, that it possesses form or

figure ; but the blind man, who has not the power of seeing, learns its figure no less accurately by the sense of touch merely.

When a solid body is moving with any considerable degree of rapidity from under our hands, such is the nature of the sensation produced, that we are immediately satisfied, that this body is changing its position. And we are equally satisfied of this, whether our eyes be open or shut. That is to say ; the sensation, which is then caused in the organ of touch, is of such a nature, that it becomes an occasion, on which that simple thought or idea, which we call motion, arises in the mind.—In another case, for instance, when we see a boat putting off from a ship, we perceive the change of position, or motion, exclusively by the sight, the sense of touch being unaffected. That is ; the different affections of the organ of sight become the occasions of this thought.

#### §. 73. Of simple ideas from reflection.

By the term, REFLECTION, seems to be properly understood the observation of the operations of our own minds, as they are employed about the ideas, which they have gotten. It is, therefore, nothing more nor less than consciousness.—Some of the simple ideas, which we receive from this source, are these, thinking, doubting, believing, and assenting, or certainty ; which have already been briefly explained.—They are rightly classed as simple ideas, since they are merely simple perceptions, and are no more compounded and can be no more resolved into any subordinate elements, than our perceptions of colour or taste. And it has also sufficiently appeared, that they have an internal origin, and that they are not directly from the senses.

#### §. 74. Of simple ideas from both of the above mentioned sources.

There are certain simple ideas, which are received both by reflection and also by means of the senses, and sometimes from both of them combined ; and such are the ideas of space, succession, and power. Upon these ideas, every thing has been already said, which was thought.

necessary. There are various others which are analogous in their origin.

§. 75. Of the ideas of existence and unity.

EXISTENCE is one of the ideas of this class. It is out of our power to define this idea, as it is all other simple ideas, but it is clearly suggested to us by every external object, which we behold. Our minds also can never have ideas, or what is the same thing, be in successive states, without an attendant impression, that those ideas or mental states actually and truly exist.

The idea, expressed by the word UNITY, is suggested by whatever, whether internal or external, can be considered as distinct and separate from any other object, about which the mind is employed. Hence, as our ideas may be regarded in this way as well as outward objects, UNITY is properly considered one of those notions, which may be referred both to the senses and to reflection.—Or the statement to the same effect may be thus given. We perceive an external object; soon after we perceive another; and as we know the first perceived object is not the second, this gives occasion for the idea of unity or oneness. Again; we are conscious of one state of mind; immediately after we are conscious of another; and thus a similar occasion is presented for the origin of the same thought. And this seems to be the most that can be said concerning it.

§. 76. Of ideas by means of the senses which are not strictly external.

In connexion with these remarks on the subject of simple ideas, it is proper to observe, that these are some of our simple notions, which can hardly be considered, as answering to the statements, which have hitherto been given. The ideas to which we refer, which are not many in number, would be classed as external rather than internal, as having a material rather than an intellectual origin. But then they are to be considered somewhat in the light of exceptions to our general statements, because they appear to have their origin in the human system considered as a whole, made up of bones, flesh, muscles, the senses;

&c., rather than to be susceptible of being traced to any particular part. The ideas, expressed by the terms, uneasiness, weariness, weakness, sickness, and the like, which every body understands, and which without doubt belong to the class of simple ideas, are of this kind. The same origin is to be ascribed to other ideas, which are of an opposite character, as ease, hilarity, health, vigour, &c.

Similar views will be found to apply to the ideas, which we express by the terms, hunger, and thirst. These, as well as the above mentioned, beyond doubt, have their origin directly in the bodily system; they are not of the reflex, or subjective class; and it is equally evident, that they are not the appropriate ideas of any one of the senses, although it is undoubtedly with our notions from this last source that they have the best claims to be reckoned. Indeed some have confounded the sensations, connected with the stomach, especially that of hunger, with our *factual* feelings. But there is a great difference. Every one must be conscious, that the feeling of hunger does not resemble the sensations of hardness or softness, or other sensations, which are usually ascribed to the touch.—The physical cause of the sensation of hunger, that is, the cause of that peculiar state of the nerves of the stomach, which is found to be antecedent to the painful feeling, has been a subject of difference of opinion, and is not well understood.

§. 77. Of the evidence in favour of this account of the origin of our ideas.

It appeared in a preceding section, that no positive proof could be brought in confirmation of the once prevalent doctrine of innate ideas, and it is natural to inquire, What direct and positive evidence is there in favour of the account, which has now been given of the origin of our early thoughts? What evidence is there, that our knowledge is acquired and not original; that it is to be traced, partly to the mind, and partly to the senses, the latter having the priority in point of time?

In answer to this inquiry let it be observed, in the first place, that the statement, which has been made on this subject, recommends itself to the common experience,

what every individual can testify, to a greater or less degree, in regard to himself.—Our ideas at first are few in number ; they are suggested by the objects, by which we are immediately surrounded ; the greater number are at first from the senses or are forced upon us by our immediate wants, and a very small proportion only are internal or abstract. But we find, as we advance in years, as we become more and more acquainted with facts in the natural world, and have more acquaintance with our fellow men, our ideas multiply both from within and without ; our views are more extensive ; and we no more arrive at once at the full stature of knowledge, than we advance without any intermediate growth from infancy to manhood.—This is the general experience, the testimony, which each one can give for himself.

If, in the second place, having ourselves come to some degree of mental capacity and information, we observe the progress of the mind in infancy and early youth in others, we shall find, as far as we are able to judge from the facts coming within our observation, the same process going on in them, which our consciousness of our own mental history enables us to testify with no little confidence in our own case.

To the infant its nursery is the world. Its first ideas of the human race are its particular conceptions of its nurse and mother ; and the origin and history of all its notions may be traced to its animal wants, to the light, that breaks in from its window, and to the few objects in the immediate neighbourhood of the cradle and hearth.

But there are other sources of information, other foundations of thought, when it has become only a few years of age. The child then learns the topography of his native village ; he has explored the margin of its river ; he has ascended its flowering hills. His mind is full of activity. And exalting views crowd upon his consciousness. He beholds ; he compares ; he wonders ; he is delighted ; he reasons. And thus knowledge is increased.

In the third place, the history of languages is a strong proof of the correctness of that account, which has been



given of the progress of the mind.—At first words are few, corresponding to ideas. The vocabulary of Savag tribes, (those for example, who inhabit the American continent,) is in general exceedingly limited. As knowledge increases, language widens itself, in order to correspond to the growth of knowledge. The use of words *literally* to express external things, and afterwards *metaphorically* to express thoughts of an internal origin, is what might be expected from the statement made, viz, That our internal knowledge is subsequent in its origin to that which is derived from the senses. Trace the words of a language to their source, and it will be found almost universally true, that words are first used in reference to sensible objects, and they will, therefore, vary with scenery, climate, and natural productions. Among the Boschuanas in South Africa, the word, *pulo*, which literally signifies *rain*, is the only term they have to express a blessing, or blessings. And why? Because among them it very seldom rains; sometimes not for years. A clouded sky sending down refreshing drops, excites in the mind of the Boschuanas the most impressive picture of happiness. But in any other country, where this peculiarity in climate does not exist, the origin of this idea will be found to be different.

And, in the fourth place, it is not too much to say that all the observations, which have been made on persons, who from their birth, or at any subsequent period have been deprived of any of the senses, and all the extraordinary facts, which have come to knowledge, having a bearing on this inquiry, go strongly in favour of the views which have been given.—It appears, for instance, from the observations, which have been made in regard to persons, who have been deaf until a particular period and then have been restored to the faculty of hearing that they have never previously had those ideas, which naturally come in by that sense. If a person has been born blind, the result is the same; or if having the sense of sight, it has so happened, that he has never seen any colours of a particular description. In the one case, he

has no ideas of colours at all, and in the other, only of those colours, which he has seen.

Of those extraordinary instances, to which we alluded, as having thrown some light on the history of our intellectual acquisitions, is the account, which is given in the *Memoirs of the French Academy of Sciences* for the year 1703, of a deaf and dumb young man in the city of Chartres. At the age of three and twenty, it so happened, to the great surprise of the whole town, that he was suddenly restored to the sense of hearing, and in a short time he acquired the use of language. Deprived for so long a period of a sense, which in importance ranks with the sight and the touch, unable to hold communion with his fellow beings by means of oral or written language, and not particularly compelled, as he had every care taken of him by his friends and relations, to bring his faculties into exercise, the powers of his mind remained without having opportunity to unfold themselves. Being examined by some men of discernment, it was found that he had no idea of a God, of a soul, of the moral merit or demerit of human actions, and what might seem to be yet more remarkable, he knew not what it was to die; the agonies of dissolution, the grief of friends, and the ceremonies of interment being to him inexplicable mysteries.—Here we see how much knowledge a person was deprived of, merely by his wanting the single sense of hearing; a proof that the senses were designed by our Creator to be the first source of knowledge, and that without them the faculties of the soul would never become operative.

But this is not the only instance of this sort, which ingenious men have noticed and recorded. In the *Transactions of the Royal Society at Edinburgh*, (Vol. vii. Pt. 1.) is a Memoir communicated by Dugald Stewart, which gives an account of James Mitchell, a boy born deaf and blind. The history of this lad, who laboured under the uncommon affliction of this double deprivation, illustrates and confirms all, that has been above stated. He made what use he could of the only senses which he possessed, those of touch, taste, and smell, and gained from

## NATURE &c. OF SIMPLE IDEAS.

from a number of ideas. It was a proof of the diligence, with which he employed the limited means, which were given him, that he had by the sense of touch thoroughly explored the ground in the neighbourhood of the house, where he lived, for hundreds of yards. But deprived of sight of hearing, and of intercourse by speech, it was very evident to those, who observed him, as might be expected, that his knowledge was in amount exceedingly small. It was destitute of those perceptions, which are appropriate to the particular senses, of which he was deprived; and also of many other notions of an internal origin, which would undoubtedly have arisen, if the powers of the mind had previously been rendered fully operative by means of those assistances, which it usually receives from the bodily organs.—Such instances as these, however they may at first appear, are extremely important. They furnish us with an appeal, not to mere speculations, but to fact. And it is only by checking undue speculation, and by continually recurring to facts, that our progress in this science will become sure, rapid, and delightful.

NOTE. The statements concerning the young man of Chartres are particularly examined in Condillac's *Essay on the Origin of Knowledge* at Section fourth of Part first. The interesting Memoir of Stewart has recently been republished in the third volume of his *Elements of Intellectual Philosophy*. It may be observed here also, that the principle laid down in this chapter in respect to the definition of simple ideas, is first fully stated and defended by Des Cartes, (*PRINCIPIA*, Pt. I, §. 10.) and subsequently by Locke, Bk. III. ch. 4. The doctrine, that some mental states are from their very nature unsusceptible of verbal explanation, has been admitted without exception by recent writers on the science of the Mind.

## CHAPTER SEVENTH.

### COMPLEX IDEAS OF SUBSTANCES.

#### §. 78. Of the relation of simple ideas to complex.

**W**E next examine complex ideas. But before entering fully into that subject, something remains to be said of the relation, which simple ideas hold to them.—When we say of any one of our thoughts, that it is **COMPLEX**, the epithet itself implies, that it is virtually equal to various other thoughts of a more elementary character, which we call **simple**.. But it is evident both from the nature of the mind, and from the relation of the external senses to it, that simple ideas, (when compared in that respect with complex,) are earliest in origin. A very little reflection evinces this.—Thus we cannot have the complex idea of *justice* without previously having had various others, which are less susceptible of analysis, and which imply in their formation a fewer number of parts. Again, when we ascribe to any particular external object a variety of elementary characteristics, and speak of it as extended, hard, coloured, rapid, sonorous, and the like, these elements undoubtedly, as they were first made known to the mind, must have been separate and simple, because they came in by separate senses.

Hence we see, that it is sufficiently near the truth, and that it is not improper to speak of our complex ideas, as derived from, or made up of simple ideas. This is the language of Locke; and when we consider how much foundation there is for it in the constitution and operations

of the human mind, there is good reason for retaining it. It is true, the language, which expresses the composition and decomposition of thought is, metaphorical, taken from what we notice to take place in material objects, but it cannot be supposed, that this will lead any one astray, who has reflected on the origin of language, and especially who turns his eye inwardly on his own internal experience.

The view, which has now been given of the virtual composition of thought, justifies the expressions, which are used in respect to the power, which we possess over our simple ideas. We are rightly said to possess a power over them, although it is a limited one. We possess no ability to annul or destroy these, or any other class of our notions, by mere direct volition; nor does it appear, that we are able in that way to call up an idea, or to detain one, which we already have, and make it an object of contemplation to the entire exclusion of others. Or if we possess this last power at all, it is only in an imperfect degree. But we have the power, (1,) Of comparing together ideas of all classes in various respects, such as extent, order, degree, time, place. The mind has a susceptibility of perceiving the agreement or disagreement of its thoughts in these particulars.

We have the power, (2,) Of combining or compounding; by means of which we form what are termed complex ideas out of two or more simple ones variously put together. That is; such combinations are the natural and inevitable result of those mental susceptibilities, which we possess. The mind, in the natural workings of its tendencies, cannot fail to possess complex ideas, which sustain to simple ideas a relation, analogous to that of a whole to its parts; in other words, it has power to form them.

#### §. 79. Division of complex ideas into three kinds.

Those ideas, which are purely simple, are few in number. Out of this small number are formed multitudes of others, which are of a complex nature. The ability, which the mind possesses, of originating complex thoughts from elementary ones, may be compared to our power of uniting together the letters of the alphabet in the formation o

words, which are of themselves few in number, but lay the foundation of almost innumerable combinations.

Complex ideas are divided into three kinds, SUBSTANCES, MODES, and RELATIONS.

Ideas of substance embrace all things of whatever character, which have a separate and real existence. The complex thoughts, called modes, do not stand for separate existences, but are expressive of the attributes, affections, or modifications of things. The class of relations includes those ideas, which have their origin by means of the comparison of one object with another.—It would seem, therefore, from the meaning attached to these terms, that this classification, when taken in its full extent, includes all those thoughts of a complex kind, which we are able to form.

#### §. 80. Complex ideas of substances.

Ideas of substance relate, in the first place, to bodies of matter.—Material bodies are made up of a number of smaller bodies or particles. But all bodies of matter, whatever may be their capability of a separation into parts, possess a oneness or unity, relatively to our conceptions of them. In other words, our understandings are so formed as to view material things as one, which we suppose and know to be capable of a separation into parts.

In that combined state, in which they are presented to our conception, they exhibit certain qualities, as extension, solidity, colour; meaning by the term, colour, the power of separating and reflecting rays of light. It is these qualities we first become acquainted with; and exclusive of them, there is nothing, which we can consider the direct subjects of our sensations. By means of its qualities, we do indeed have an indirect idea or notion of matter, and learn that it exists. But we cannot from these alone, nor in any other way, learn what it is in itself.

The sentiment here conveyed may be expressed in other terms by saying, that our knowledge of matter is limited to the knowledge of its qualities and properties. The essence, or what the Schoolmen would call the *sub-*

STRATUM, of material things is beyond our comprehension.

Hence an idea of substance, (speaking now of material existences,) is that complex state of the mind, which considers a number of qualities, belonging to any particular substance as one, or as naturally and permanently united.—Instances are the complex ideas, expressed by the words, sun, loadstone, man, horse, iron, tree, indeed all those intellectual states, which correspond to that great variety of separate, material objects, which continually come beneath our inspection.

In the idea of man we have, among others, the simple ideas of figure, colour, motion, conscience.

§. 81. Spiritual existences included under this class.

But ideas of substance are not to be limited to material objects. Under this class is to be included, in the second place, our ideas of immaterial existences, of the mind, of the soul in its disembodied state, of angels, of God himself.\*

It is true, they are not substances in the ordinary meaning of the term, that is, they are not *material* substances, like the sensible objects, with which we are so much conversant, and to which we almost exclusively apply that name. But they are substances in this sense,—they are real and not imaginary,—they have an existence,—they are not the mere relations of one thing to another, not the mere dependencies on them, but the things themselves.

But some will doubt, whether we have that clear knowledge of mind and of spiritual things in general, which we have of material bodies; and on this ground think,

\*The term SUBSTANCE, from the Latin *substantia*, was applied first to material objects. An idea, originally derived from matter, and applied to matter exclusively, was subsequently extended to things immaterial. With this more extended meaning, it is employed by Des Cartes. From him it was adopted into the philosophy of Locke with the same extent of meaning, viz., as synonymous with *being* or *existence*. And it is now difficult, although the common and popular acceptance of the term is more limited, to introduce another in its stead. Nor will it be essential, provided its meaning, as it is here applied, be accurately kept in mind.

that they ought not to be included in the same division of our complex notions.—This is a point, worthy a moment's notice.

§. 82. Our knowledge of spirit the same as of matter.

Although it may appear strange to some, when we say, that we know no more of matter, about which we are daily conversant, and which we see and touch, than concerning mental or spiritual existences, which our bodily senses are unable to approach and examine, it is a sentiment at last almost universally received, and with the very best reason. It has already been remarked of matter, that we know nothing concerning it but by its qualities and properties, and we know nothing of immaterial existences likewise, except in the same way ; and our knowledge, therefore, is in both cases on the same footing, being the same in kind at least, if not in degree. Our acquaintance with the properties of material bodies may possibly go further than our acquaintance with those of mind, but it is in both cases circumscribed by the same kind of limitation, unable to advance beyond those properties.

Observing certain mental operations, thinking, remembering, willing, assenting, doubting, and the like, we cannot avoid the conviction of the existence of something, to which they belong, or of which they are qualities ; and we call it spirit or a spiritual being.

The same of matter ;—we learn its qualities, primary and secondary, colour, extension, figure, motion, divisibility, &c. ; and these, viewed by the mind in their state of combination or as having a common and coetaneous origin, give us the idea, which we call by that name.

If it be asked, how it happens, that we so uniformly refer these operations and qualities to what we term matter and spirit, or rather how they are so promptly suggested on the observation of their properties, (there being an universal belief in the existence of the material and immaterial world.) the only answer is, *that we are thus constituted*. We are under a sort of *necessity*, in consequence of natural tendencies of our constitution, of connecting



with the appearances, which we witness, the idea of a really existing something, which we call, either matter or mind, material or spiritual, according to the character of those appearances.

But when this idea is once suggested, we are taught by the inutility of our efforts to proceed further, that we have reached one boundary of our knowledge, which we cannot pass; and that while we have an idea of matter and spirit, and cannot but believe in their existence, we know no more of them, nor shall we probably ever know more, than those appearances and operations, whatever they may be, which they shall exhibit.

§. 83. Of cohesion of bodies and motion by impulse.

If there be any, who, after what has been said, think they understand matter better than they do spirit, then would we desire them to give an explanation of what that is in matter, which is termed cohesion. That the particles of gold, of iron, of water, and of other material bodies are held together by what is termed cohesion, is a fact, which, being within our daily observation, no one is inclined to doubt, but it is the fact only which we know, and nothing more.

One body impinging on another puts it in motion, and we term it motion by impulse. But how motion passes from one body to another, when the particles of those bodies come in contact, if indeed there can be any actual contact, is by no means so easy to be determined. It will be found as difficult to be understood and explained as any of those obstacles, which are supposed to stand in the way of a full knowledge of spiritual existences.

Some further illustrations of this subject in particular instances remain to be made.

§. 84. Explanations on certain ideas of this class.

If called upon to give an account of the loadstone, which is the name of one of the many ideas of substance, we could give no other answer than by an enumeration

its qualities, something, which has colour, hardness, friability, power to draw iron.

The sun has been mentioned, as one among the complex ideas of substances, but little more do we know of it than this, that it is an aggregate of certain qualities or simple ideas, such as brightness, heat, roundness, regularity of motion.

We say of gold, that it is a combination of the qualities of yellowness, great weight, fusibility, ductility, &c., existing together, and forming the material substance, to which we give that name.

#### §. 85 Remarks on complexity in the states of the mind.

It would seem from the statement thus far given in regard to our ideas of substance, that there is in this class of our thoughts a complexity in the state of the mind, corresponding to the complexity in the object, and without this complexity, in all cases, of the intellectual principle, there cannot be what is termed a complex idea. But it is not to be thought, that we arrive at this ultimate complexity of mental state by a single act, by an undivided and inseparable movement of the mind, although, such is the rapidity of the process, it may in some cases seem to be so. On the contrary, every simple idea, involved in, and forming a part of the compound, so far as we have any distinct conception of the compounded idea, passes under a rapid review, and the complex state of the mind or complex idea is the result of this rapid review.

We have already hinted in a former section, that the nature of the mind itself, and in particular its connection with the senses, imply the existence of simple ideas because the possibility of a formation of those, which are complex. We cannot, for instance, have a complex idea of man, of iron, or of a tree, without having first, at some time, subjected each simple idea, of which it is made up, to a separate examination.

This glance of the mind at the various simple ideas is performed indeed with such extreme quickness, at least generally so, that the successive steps of it are not

recollected ; but this, when we consider the rapidity of the mind's operations in other instances, is no sufficient objection to the statement, which has been made.

The process in the formation of complex ideas goes on from step to step, from one simple idea to another, but when the examination is completed, the ultimate state of the mind, which the completion of the process implies, is not to be considered as in any degree wanting in unity or oneness. It is, in itself considered, as much one and indivisible as any of those states of mind, which we know to be simple.

§. 86. Connection existing between material substances to be considered.

In forming our complex ideas of substances, it is highly important, that they should be conformed, as nearly as possible, to the real nature of things ; and that we should not combine in the idea any thing, which is not in the substance. And in order to this, it should be remembered, that bodies are operated upon, one by another, and exhibit to us different qualities, in consequence of this operation.

One of the qualities of gold is yellowness, but break off entirely the intercourse between the particles of gold and the rays of light, and yellowness ceases. Life and motion are ideas, which commonly enter into our complex notion of animals ; but deprive them of air, and life and motion are gone.

We would not say, that, in these particular instances, in our complex notions of gold and of animal, these ideas, yellowness, life, and motion, are to be struck out. We use them merely as an illustration, that, in making up our complex notion of any substances, we are to consider not only the objects themselves, but also to take into view other objects, which have an influence on them.

§. 87. Of chimerical ideas of substances.

There are certain ideas, the consideration of which properly falls in this chapter, termed CHIMERICAL ; the ideas

for example, which are expressed by the words, centaur, dragon, hypogriff, harpy.

The centaur is represented, as an animal, partly man, and partly horse. The dragon is supposed to be an immense serpent, furnished with wings, and capable of making its way through the atmosphere by their aid. The hypogriff is an imaginary horse, capable of performing aerial journeys in the same way.

Ideas of this kind are termed chimerical, because there is nothing corresponding to them in nature. There is no reality of the sort intimated by the term.

If a person were known to have an idea of a body, yellow or of some other colour, malleable, fixed, possessing in a word all the qualities of iron or of gold with this difference only, of its being lighter than water, it would be what we term a chimerical idea. That is; it would have nothing corresponding to it in the nature of things.

#### §. 88. Of what is meant by real ideas.

REAL IDEAS are the opposite of chimerical, having a correspondence with the nature of things, or being such ideas as things in their true nature are fitted to produce.

Hence simple ideas are real, because there can be no simple idea, except it be such as nature in some of its forms, either external or internal, is fitted to cause within us. Also those mental states, called simple modes, which are to be considered in the next chapter, are real, because they are only the multiplications or repetitions of some simple idea.

Excepting such chimerical ideas, as were mentioned in the preceding section, viz. dragon, centaur, faery, harpy, hypogriff, ghost, hobgoblin, iron lighter than water, &c. all ideas of substance are real. But when we speak of ideas of substance, with such exceptions as above, being real, we do not mean to say, that they do perfectly and in all respects represent their corresponding objects.

In our complex idea of gold, we combine the simple ideas of yellowness, weight, malleability, and perhaps others, but probably none combine, in their conception of it,

all its properties; so that, although we speak of it, as a *real*, we do not speak of it, as a perfect or adequate idea. The same of other instances.

Further, it may be incidentally remarked, that what are termed chimerical ideas are formed in times of ignorance and superstition, when the human mind is unable to frame just notions of things. But combinations of thought of this kind, although they are probably to be found in all languages, are in general few in number.

#### §. 89. Importance of having real ideas.

Ideas are the elements or materials, about which the mind is employed in its various operations, and without which there can be neither faith, reasoning, nor knowledge. It is true, that those ideas, which we call chimerical, and of which there are no archetypes in nature, admit of being compared together. We may examine, combine, and compare them the same as any other notions, which we are able to form. But most evidently the investigation of such fantastical thoughts will be unprofitable, and will render us none the wiser.

It is the same here as in other things. We do not account a man rich, whose coffers are filled with hay, wood, and stubble, instead of the precious metals. Nor can intellectual opulence be conferred by ideas, which are not founded on the truth of nature. Every person, therefore, is not to be considered well furnished, who has a great number of ideas, merely from the circumstance of the greatness of their number; but their character in various respects, their objects, and their conformity to those objects, are to be taken into consideration.

#### §. 90. Of our ideas of angels.

We have our knowledge of mind in the same way as of matter, that is, by an observation of its qualities. And we are led from the accounts given of celestial messengers to conceive of that class of beings, to which the term, *angels*, is applied, as if there were some resemblance or analogy, existing between our minds and them; in other words



we regard them, as beings which are spiritual or immaterial.

But we do not speak of them, as to their nature and powers, with the same degree of confidence, with which we speak of the human mind and of matter, since they are a class of beings, not coming under the examination of the senses, neither are they to be examined by us in the way, in which we can form an acquaintance with our own intellectual part.

For our knowledge, therefore, of angels and of any other class of beings superiour to ourselves but subordinate to the Deity, we must rest satisfied with what information is given us in the Holy Scriptures.

#### §. 91. Origin of the idea of God.

Among the complex ideas, included under this class, is to be mentioned in particular that of God. The origin of the idea of the Supreme Being, (supposing it with Mr. Locke not to be innate or connatural in the mind,) seems to be naturally accounted for in this way.

We suppose a person entirely separated from the rest of the world, dwelling in some distant island, and furnished, as it were, only with the senses, and with the variety of objects around him, fitted to operate upon them.

He will, in the first place, connect together certain things, as antecedents and consequents, or what is the same thing, as causes and effects, such as the waving of woods and the blowing of the wind, the wearing away of the shore and the motion of the waves against it.

Having in this way formed an idea of antecedent and consequent, it will be found, in the second place, that the thought will ultimately arise in his mind, that those appearances in nature, which he has been in the habit of regarding as antecedents or causes, should themselves have a cause; that while the tempest breaks down in his own sight the forest, there should, and must be some one to guide the storm, and while the shore crumbles beneath the incursions of the ocean, there must be something, though where or what it is, he cannot tell, which both pushes on and restrains its raging.

The idea at first, it must be admitted, is an obscure one, but it in time becomes less so; for nothing can be more true than the assertion of the Psalmist, that, in reference to the glory of God, "Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth knowledge."

We remarked in regard to the great first Cause, which the natural workings of soul in our solitary islander will sooner or later inevitably discover, that he is unable to say where or what it is; and this inability becomes in the end a favourable circumstance. He cannot say of that first Cause, that it is in the stars, or in the ocean, or in the wild waste of the wilderness, but conscious of this inability to discover it in any particular place, he learns to identify it not with one merely, but with *every* "local habitation," and to associate it with all unmeasured space, and although he can in one sense say, it is no where, he can, in another sense say, *God is every where*.

**NOTE.** It is a thought, which can reach and influence the mind of all classes of people, that the works of nature lead us up to God. This is not human philosophy merely, but of the Bible itself. "The invisible things of God, (Rom. i. 20,) from the creation of the world are clearly seen." Hence all other modes of argument have either failed to be understood; or when understood, have not carried general conviction. This we apprehend to be true even of Dr. Clarke's (so called) **DEMONSTRATION**. His argument in a few words may be thus given. (1) The human mind is so constituted, (which is no doubt the fact,) that it necessarily forms the ideas of **SPACE** and **DURATION**. (2) We do not conceive of these, as having boundaries but as illimitable. (3) But space and duration are not substances or independent existences, but the attributes of things. (4) Therefore, there must be a Being to whom they belong, or of whom they may be predicated, and whose existence, consequently, surpasses the limits of all time and place.—It is chiefly in the two last steps that the understanding is bewildered, and that we choose after much painful reflection to read with the Apostle and the Psalmist the excellency of God in his handy-works.

## CHAPTER EIGHTH.

### SIMPLE AND MIXED MODES.

#### §. 92. Meaning of modes and classes of them.

**T**HE second great class of our complex states of mind are known in the Essay of Locke, and also in many other treatises, under the name of Modes. The thoughts, which are designated by this name, stand for those things, which are supposed not to exist independently by themselves, but are rather the dependencies on, the attributes, or the affections of substances, such as are expressed by the words honour, gratitude, treachery, credulity, and also by the names of numbers and of mathematical figures, as dozen, twenty, square, parallelogram.

On this class or division of our complex notions we are now to remark; and shall consider them under two heads, viz., simple modes and mixed modes.

#### §. 93. Of complex ideas called simple modes.

**SIMPLE MODES** are complex ideas made up of those simple ideas which are all of the same kind; in other words, they are merely different modifications of the same original thought, carried on to a greater or less extent, but without any intermixture of foreign materials.

Of this class of ideas are a dozen, a score, a thousand, which are simple modes formed by the repeated addition of units as far on as the collections specified by those names.

To this class belong ideas of time, as an hour, a day, a



month, a year, and also ideas of extension in length, as a furlong, a mile, a league.

§. 94. Of simple modes from number.

The idea of unity is derived in some instances from the senses. That is to say, it is always suggested to the mind, whenever we find ourselves able to consider any external object, as distinct and separate from other objects. The consciousness also, which we cannot avoid, that the mind has different ideas or is in different states, and that consequently, there is a real line of distinction between each succeeding state and that, which went before, gives us the same notion of unity or oneness. So that it is an idea, which we become possessed of, both by means of the senses, and from reflection; but it is a simple idea, as we cannot resolve it into any thing more elementary.

What are termed the simple modes of number, are formed by the repeating or addition of the original idea and it is worthy of remark, that there is, the utmost distinctness, a marked line of separation between each mode. The numbers, one, two, and three, are as distinct and separate from each other, as one hundred and two hundred

Names are necessary to numbers. We repeat the idea of an unit, and this repetition or addition becomes a collective idea, to which we give the name of two. To the collective or complex idea, which arises on the addition of another unit, we give the name of THREE; all enumeration being only the addition of units with the giving of name to the collective ideas thus formed. As diversities in numbers are only differences of more or less, and are not distinguished from each other by size or colour, or in other ways, but only by addition and subtraction, there seems to be the more need of names. If it should be admitted to be possible, that we may have simple modes of number without giving names, it is very evident, that without names we could not employ them in enumeration; so that they would in that case be entirely useless.

We find, that many uncivilized tribes of Savages are unable to carry enumeration to any great extent, not be

cause their minds are naturally incapable of this operation, but in consequence of the scanty materials of their languages. Mr. Locke mentions a Brazilian tribe, called the *Tououpinambos*, who had no names for numbers above five; any number beyond that they made out by showing their fingers and the fingers of those, who were present. When Savages wish to express a very large number, they remind us of the leaves on the trees, the stars in the sky, and the sands on the sea-shore. And the same remark a little qualified will apply to communities somewhat raised above the savage state. Thus Abraham was led abroad at night, and was commanded to try and number the stars; a much more expressive intimation of the great increase of his posterity, than could have been conveyed by the restricted power of the Hebrew numerals.

In view of such facts as these, two rules are laid down by Mr. Locke in regard to correct enumerations,

(1) That the mind distinguish carefully between any two ideas, which differ from each other only by the addition or subtraction of that primary element, which we call an unit;

(2) That it retain in memory the names or marks of the several intermediate combinations from an unit to the number, which completes the sum. Without an observance of these directions no one can be assured, that he has made a correct enumeration.

#### §. 95. Simple modes from duration.

It was remarked in speaking of our simple ideas, that our idea of succession was obtained in this way. Our ideas, while we are awake, are constantly going in a train, one coming and another departing. In this way, having the regular appearance and disappearance of thought fixed upon our attention, we receive the idea of succession; and also by observing what takes place in external objects, such as the removal of bodies and the supply of one place by others, the changes of day and night, &c. It is by the aid of the simple idea of succession, that

we form the idea of DURATION; the ideas, formed from which last, have a claim to be ranked with the simple modes.

We are conscious not only of our existence, but of the continuance of our existence, or of our PERSONAL IDENTITY; we take it for *granted*, or rather it is forced upon us as an original intimation of our minds, in every thing we do, in every step of reasoning. This indelible conviction, that we are what we have been, being considered in connection with our succession of ideas, gives rise to our idea of duration. So that whenever we can speak or think of our existence as commensurate with or measured by a certain number of ideas, we are furnished with this additional notion, to which the name of duration is given.

As we cannot have the notion of duration without succession, hence it happens, that we know nothing of duration when we are perfectly asleep, because we know not, that there are then any of those intellectual changes, which we term a succession of ideas. If a person could sleep with a perfect suspension of all his intellectual operations from this time until the resurrection, the whole of that period would appear to him as nothing. Ten thousand years passed under such circumstances would be less than a few days or even hours.

That it is only by comparing that consciousness of the permanency of our own existence, which ever attends us in our waking moments, with the successive changes taking place within and without, that we acquire our notion of DURATION, is in some measure proved by a variety of facts, which have been ascertained and preserved.

There is, for example, in a French work, (*L'HISTOIRE DE L'ACADEMIE ROYALE DES SCIENCES POUR L'ANNEE, 1719.*) a statement to the following effect.—There was in Lausanne a nobleman, who, as he was giving orders to a servant, suddenly lost his speech and all his senses. Different remedies were tried, but, for a very considerable time, without effect. For six months he appeared to be in a deep sleep, unconscious of every thing. At the end of that period, however, resort having been had to certain

surgical operations, he was suddenly restored to his speech and the exercise of his understanding. When he recovered, the servant, to whom he had been giving orders, when he was first seized with the distemper, happening to be in the room, he asked him, if he had done what he had ordered him to, not being sensible, that any interval, except perhaps a very short one, had elapsed during his illness.

We get the idea of TIME, by considering any part of duration, as set or marked off by periodical measures, such as days or years. And it should be remarked, when we consider our design of showing the connection of our ideas with the two great sources of sensation and reflection, that we obtain the idea of these lengths or measures by means of the senses, viz. by our observation of the annual and diurnal revolutions of the sun.

Under the simple modes from duration, then, may be reckoned minutes, hours, days, months, years, indeed every division, of which duration is susceptible.

#### §. 96. Simple modes from extension.

To extension, which is a simple idea, derived from the senses of sight and touch, we give the name of length, when it is contemplated as existing only in one direction.

All our artificial measures of extension, such as an inch, a foot, a yard, a furlong, a mile, a league, a degree, whatever may be the process of the mind in forming those measures, are among its simple modes. That is to say, if we adopt an inch as the original measurement or the unit, from which we are to begin, then a foot consists of parts of extension, signified by the term inch, multiplied twelve times; and a yard is the same measure increased or multiplied thirty six times.

#### §. 97. Nature of the idea of infinity.

Of our idea of infinity it seems difficult to give any satisfactory explanation or to say with certainty where it should be classed, but there are three things, with which

we are in the habit of connecting it, viz. number, duration, and extension.

We form the idea of infinity of number by adding numbers as far as possible, with the additional notion, that this process may be carried on to any extent whatever.

We form the idea of infinity of duration by repeating the ideas of time, such as an hour, a day, or a year, the same as in number.

We obtain the idea of infinity of extension, or rather of that modification of extension, which is termed **LENGTH**, in the same manner, by repeating the ideas of an inch, a foot, a yard, or other measure, always feeling, when we have carried on this addition to the utmost extent of which we are capable, that it may be prosecuted still further, indefinitely.

We seem to ourselves to receive the clearest idea of infinity from numbering, because the distinction between all its modes is very accurately marked, so that we have a well defined perception of it. Indeed it does not appear, that, without the assistance of numbers, we could ever form the ideas of infinity of duration and extension.

We obtain the notion of **ETERNITY** by supposing our ideas of time, for instance, a month, or year, repeated in both directions, in time past as well as in that which is to come, always retaining the conviction of the possibility of the further prosecution of this process of repeating.

#### §. 98. Of the complex ideas called mixed modes.

**MIXED MODES** are complex ideas, the attributes or dependencies of substances, compounded of simple ideas of different kinds. Instances are the ideas of theft, murder, justice, patriotism, gratitude, &c.

**THEFT** is a change of property without the consent of the owner, and with fraudulent intentions on the part of the person, who removes it. Consequently, it embraces among other ideas, differing from each other, those of ownership, transference, and consent.

**MURDER** is putting a person to death with evil inten

of malice aforethought ; consequently includes the ideas of man, death, evil feelings, premeditation.

GRATITUDE is an emotion of love or complacency towards a person for some act of kindness, which he has done to us. In this mixed mode, therefore, we have reference, not only to the person, who has received the benefit, but to the person, who conferred it, as well as to the object itself, and to the intellectual emotion excited by it.

§. 99. Of the different ways of forming mixed modes.

There are two ways in particular, by means of which we receive into the mind MIXED modes.

(1) The first method is by experience or observation of things themselves.—We see a person wrestling, boxing, or riding, and we thence learn the ideas, which are conveyed by those words.

(2) The second method is by invention or voluntarily joining together several simple ideas in our own minds.

The person, that first invented etching or printing, on occasion, by combining ideas, which had never been joined together before, for the complex notions, which are expressed by those terms. And we may suppose, that mixed mode, expressed by the word, FALSEHOOD, and many others, were formed in a similar way.

By examining mixed modes and tracing them to their original elements, we shall find them ultimately connected with the great fountains of our knowledge, sensation and reflection.

§. 100. Not the same mixed modes in all languages.

The customs, habits, modes of thinking, political institutions, &c., are not the same in all countries, but differ in a greater or less degree. Hence there is need of different expressions, that is, of expressions in one language precisely corresponding to expressions in another. Thus the words, OSTRAKISMOS in the Greek, PROSCRIPTION in Latin, and CORBAN in the Hebrew, expressed ideas, which most other nations found nothing precisely corresponding, and, consequently, had no corresponding terms.

~~This suggests a remark on the changes which take place in language.~~ It is well known, that there are constant alterations in customs, and hardly less frequent fluctuations in feeling and opinion, and hence there necessarily arise new combinations of thought or ideas; and these must be expressed by new names.

If people should be found unable or unwilling to invent new names for the expression of new complex ideas, they would evidently be subjected to great inconvenience. This may be seen, if we deprive ourselves of the benefit of any complex terms, for instance, *reprieve* and *appeal*, and attempt to converse on the subjects, where they naturally occur.

We do not consider a mixed mode, as actually existing in a language without a name.—The number of mixed modes, therefore, in any language, although it might be greatly increased, is looked upon as limited by the number of names or words, by which they are expressed.

NOTE. Consult, in reference to the above and the preceding chapter, Locke's Essay, Bk. II. CHS. 12—24. Brown's Philosophy of the Mind, LECT. x. Clarke's Discourse on the Being and Attributes of God, compared with the Papers of Leibnitz and Clarke, III. §. 3., IV. §. 10., V. §. 42. Stewart's Historical Dissertation, Pt. II §. 3. Soame Jenyn's Disquisitions, IV, On the Nature of Time, &c

## CHAPTER NINTH.

### COMPLEX IDEAS OF RELATION.

**Of the susceptibility of perceiving or feeling relations.**

seems to be the custom of the language, to say, mind brings its thoughts together, and places them side, and compares them. And such is the impetuosity of all systems of arbitrary signs, that this logic will probably continue to be employed, although without some attention it will be likely to lead to error.—When it is said, that our thoughts are brought together, or placed side by side, nothing can be meant than this, that they are immediately united. And when it is further said, that we compare them, the meaning is, that we perceive or feel their relation to each other in certain respects.

The mind, therefore, has an original susceptibility or power of answering to this result; which is sometimes known, under the name of RELATIVE SUGGESTION. The human intellect is so constituted, that, when it perceives different objects together, or has immediately successive conceptions of absent objects of perception, their mutual relations are immediately felt by it. It considers them as equal or unequal, like or unlike, as having the same or different ends, and in various other respects.

This mental power is an important one, and continually intrudes itself on our notice, in our internal history.

It is especially, not only in that class of our comparisons, which are before us, but in the processes of reflection, imagination, and reasoning.



## §. 102. Occasions on which feelings of relation may arise.

It is to this mental susceptibility we owe the third general class of our complex thoughts, which are called, in consequence of being formed by the comparison of our intellectual states one with another, **IDEAS OF RELATION**.—Any of the ideas, which the mind is able to frame, may either directly, or indirectly, lay the foundation of other ideas of relation, since they may in general be compared together; or if they cannot themselves be readily placed side by side, may be the *occasion* of bringing others into comparison. But those ideas, which are of an external origin, are representative of objects and their qualities; and hence we may speak of the relations of things no less, than of the relations of thought. And such relations are every where discoverable.

We behold the flowers of the field, and one is fairer than another. We hear many voices, and one is louder or softer than another. But these differences of sound and of brightness could never be known to us without the power of perceiving relations. Again, we see a fellow-being; and as we make him the subject of our thoughts, we at first think of him only as a man. But then he may at the same time be a father, a brother, a son, a citizen, a legislator; these terms express ideas of relation.

## §. 103. Of the use of correlative terms.

Correlative terms are such terms, as are used to express corresponding ideas of relation. They suggest the relations with great readiness, and by means of them the mind can be more steadily, and longer, and with less pain, fixed upon the ideas, of which they are expressive. The words, father and son, legislator and constituent, brother and sister, husband and wife, and others of this class, as soon as they are named, at once carry our thoughts beyond the persons, who are the subjects of these relations, to the relations themselves. Wherever, therefore, there are correlative terms, the relations may be expected to be clear to the mind.

The word, **CITIZEN**, is a relative term, but there being

and correlative, expressing a corresponding relation, and it more difficult to form a ready conception of the thing signified, than of SUBJECT, which has the correlatives, ruler and governor.

It is hardly necessary to remind any one, that the relation is something different from the things related. The relations are often changing, while the subjects of them remain the same. A person may sustain the relation and be name of a father to-day; but the inroads of death may, in the morrow deprive him of his offspring, and thus terminate that character, which the relative term, father, expresses.

#### §. 104. Of the great number of our ideas of relation.

Mr. Locke has the remark, that it would make a volume to go over all sorts of relations, and with good reason; since they are as numerous, as that almost endless variety of respects, in which our ideas may be compared together, and as the great multitude of circumstances, which are to be taken into view in such comparisons. With the single idea of man how many others are connected in consequence of the various relations, which he sustains!

He may, at one and the same time, be a father, brother, son, grandson, brother-in-law, son-in-law, husband, friend, enemy, subject, general, judge, patron, townsman, European, Englishman, servant, master, possessor, superior, inferior, bigger, less, older, younger, contemporary, like, unlike, together with sustaining a variety of other relations too numerous to be mentioned.

Such is the number of relations, that it is found difficult to reduce them to classes; and probably no classification of them, which has been hitherto proposed, exhausts them in their full extent. The most of those, which it will be necessary to notice, may be brought into the four classes of Proportional, Natural, and Instituted relations, and Reasons of Cause and Effect.

#### §. 105. Of proportional relations.

Among the subordinate divisions, of which RELATIONS are susceptible, the first class to be mentioned, and

number of ideas of  
RELATIONS.—  
ge. included all those ideas, w  
in. included all those ideas, w  
o. included all those ideas, w  
T. included all those ideas, w  
f. included all those ideas, w

is made up of parts  
and of consequence  
more or less. H  
consider the proportion, w  
size or degrees.  
sweeter, wiser, larger, sm  
adjectives, which admit of b  
or superlative.  
apple, that it is sweeter than  
he is wiser than another, wit  
that they have been comp  
to their degrees of sweetness,  
to their degrees of knowledg

relative which are supposed to be pos  
arms, (whether they are to be c  
relations or not, it is not  
which are supposed to be pos  
any comparison or relative  
We allude to no small nur  
positive degree;—take as instar  
ignorant, rich, poor, old, yo  
at first sight appear to be entirely  
considered to be so, and as exclu  
differences, they will be found on  
somewhat different character from  
imagined.

be considered what we mean, when  
he is old. We evidently compare hi  
age. whenever we use those expressi  
people in general, and place the pa  
years, to which he may have attained  
period, which we are in the habit o  
ordinary limit of man's pilgrimage.  
when we say of any person, that he is you  
lered as falling far short of an assu

period, an approximation to which gives to another person the reputation of age.

Again, when we say of any individual, that he is learned or ignorant, we tacitly make a comparison of what he has learnt with the acquisitions of mankind in general. If it exceed the ordinary sum of human knowledge, we call him learned; if it fall short, he is characterized as ignorant.

Accordingly, a comparison of this sort being implied in the use of epithets, a North American Savage, or a person of any other uncivilized race, might enjoy the reputation of great knowledge among his own people, who would rightly be accounted ignorant, if he were placed in another situation.

#### §. 107. Of ideas of natural relations.

**SECONDLY**; Having mentioned proportional relations, as forming a minor or subordinate division of this third general class of our complex ideas, it is to be noticed here, that there is another, a **SECOND** occasion of comparing things together, so as to ascertain ideas of relation; viz. When we consider their origin or beginning, and see how other things stand in reference to that origin. And such ideas as are ascertained in this way, and are found to result, as it were, from creation and nature, are what are termed **IDEAS OF NATURAL RELATIONS**.

It seems to be particularly characteristic of those relations, which we have now in view, that they are permanent; meaning by the remark, that they are not altered and brought to an end by ordinary circumstances; but, as they begin to exist at the moment of birth, will be found to terminate only with the life either of the subject of the relation or of the correlated person.

Such are the ideas of father, brother, son, nephew, &c.

Mr. Locke mentions the term, countrymen, that is, those, who were born in the same country or tract of ground, as belonging here.

#### §. 108. Of ideas of instituted or conventional relations.

**THIRDLY**; There are relations, which do not result

from the constitution of nature, but are the consequence of the various obligations and duties in civil society ; and these, therefore, may be called ideas of INSTITUTED OR CONVENTIONAL RELATIONS.—Thus a GENERAL is one, who has the power to command an army, this power being delegated to him by virtue of certain provisions, entering originally into the terms of the civil compact.—An ARMY is a collection or body of armed men, who are under obligations, by the terms of such civil compact, to obey one man.—A CITIZEN OR BURGHER is one, who has a right to the privileges of civil society in a certain place; that is to say, is the subject of some government, to the principles of whose organization he is supposed to have consented, and to have taken a part in it.

These relations may be distinguished from the natural relations in the preceding section, by the circumstance, that they are not permanent, but are dependent upon the will or agreement of men, and may terminate before the subjects of them have ceased to exist.

The general of an army may cease to act in that capacity, since the government, who gave him his authority, may take it away again. The army may be disbanded, and the bonds of civil society may be broken loose, and its members go back again into the state of nature.

It is not thus in natural relations. The father sustains the character, intimated by that term, so long as the son lives; the son sustains the filial relation so long as the existence of the father, and, in all cases of this description, the relations do not terminate, until one of the correlated parties is no more.

#### §. 109. Cause and effect ideas of relation.

Of CAUSE and EFFECT we have already had occasion to remark, that it is impossible to trace any positive connection between them, and that they are nothing more than regular or invariable antecedents and consequents. The ideas expressed by these terms, belong to the class, which we are now considering. They certainly have a relation to each other ; the constitution of the mind places them in

that light, although no physical connection can be traced. We cannot conceive of a cause, if we exclude from the list of our ideas the correlative notion of effect. Nor, on the other hand, do we call any thing an effect without a reference to some antecedent. These two notions, therefore, involve or imply the existence of each other; that is, are relative.

If we examine the occasion of the first origin of these thoughts, we shall there see grounds of the correctness of this view.—To those things, which from time to time fall under our notice, we give the name of events, occurrences, or facts, when considered in themselves. They are then the mere facts, the mere events; and nothing more. But when in the course of our experience, they are found to have certain invariable forerunners, we cease to apply these terms, and call them, in reference to their antecedents, *EFFECTS*. And in like manner the antecedents are called *CAUSES*, not in themselves considered, but in reference to what invariably comes after.

§. 110. Ideas of relation implying or involving cause and effect.

The three classes of proportional, natural, and instituted relations do not embrace all, which properly come within this general division of our complex thoughts; although they include a great part of them. Among other ideas of relation, not reducible to either of these classes, are some, which involve the notions of cause and effect.

Such, for instance, as are expressed by the concrete terms, which concern the mechanical and liberal arts, as painter, sculptor, painter, poet.—When we look at an interesting piece of statuary, the sight of it naturally suggests its author. But when our mind is thus directed from the statue to the sculptor, it is evident, that we do not think of him as we do of a thousand others, but we combine with our conception of the individual a reference to what he has done. We unite with the mere complex idea of man that of a cause, and this combination so alters the character of the complex thought, that it is proper to class it as an idea of relation.—So when we look at a fine

painting, we are naturally reminded of the artist. the word, painter, which we apply to him, expresses merely the man, but comprises the additional notion of relation, which he holds to the interesting picture before us.

There are other relations, involved in the terms, which express the position or place of objects; also in the dates or periods of time, in which events have happened. They require a brief notice.

§. 111. Place is an idea of relation.

We cannot conceive of any body as having place or position, without comparing it with some other bodies. therefore, having two bodies fixed, or which maintain same relative position, we can compare a third body to them, the third body can then be said to have place or position.—This may be illustrated by the chess-men, placed on the chess-board. We say, the men are in the same place, although the board may have been removed from one room to another. We use this language, because we consider the men only in relation to each other and parts of the board, and not in relation to the rooms or parts of the room.

Hence we may clearly have an idea of the place or position of all the different parts of the universe, considered separately, because they may be compared with other parts; although we are unable to form any idea of the place or position of the universe considered, as a whole, because we have then no other body, with which we compare it.

But if place express a relative notion, then it follows that all words, which involve or imply the place or position of an object, are of a similar character. Such are words, high and low, near and distant, above and below, further, nearer, hither, yonder, here, there, where, and like.

§. 112. Chronological dates involve ideas of relation.

The independence of the North American colonies

declared, July 4th, 1776.—The meaning of these expressions may be thus illustrated.

We assume the present year 1828, as a given period and reckon back to the year, *one*, which coincides with the birth of our Saviour; then the year, 1776, expresses the distance between these two extremes, viz. one, and eighteen hundred, twenty eight. This seems to be all we learn, when we say, the Independence of the United States was declared at the period above mentioned.

We mean the same thing, and convey the same idea, whether we say that the Saviour was born in the year, *one*, of the Christian era, or, in the year, 4004, from the creation of the world. But, in the last case, the year, 4004, expresses the distance between these two extremes, viz. the beginning of the world, and the present time; while, in the first instance, the event itself forms the beginning of the series.—So that all dates appear to be properly classed under ideas of relation.

§ 113. Modes, substances, and relations resolvable into simple ideas.

All our complex ideas, whether *MODES*, *SUBSTANCES*, or *RELATIONS*, may be traced back and resolved into simple ideas, although it may not be very obvious, in some instances, how this is to be done, or when we have arrived at the end of the analysis. It seems in general to be more easy to ascertain what are the simple ideas, which enter into the formation of the two first classes, than of the third. But nothing, it must be confessed, is so much wanting as the patience necessary to go into a careful examination of our thoughts, in order to a successful result even in this last class.

When we say, that honey is sweeter than bread, or that iron is harder than wax, the words, *SWEETER* and *HARDER* express relations or relative ideas, but being analyzed, so far as we are able to, they clearly terminate in the simple ideas of sweetness and hardness. These, which are the ultimate and ruling notions, have their birth-place in the senses; and although other ideas are subsequently superadded to them, there are none, which are beyond



the limits of sensation and reflection, as those two sources of knowledge have already been explained.

Again, when we say of any individual, whom we happen to see, that he is our friend or our enemy, words which not only express relations, but are correlative to each other, what do we mean to say or imply in the use of such expressions, but this; viz.—(1,) That he is a man, (2,) That he exercises love or hatred, (3,) That we are the subjects of it. And having made this general analysis of the terms, we are then to consider what the complex notion, expressed by the word, MAN, is made up of, to inquire also where the idea of LOVE or of HATRED is to be classed, and what is its origin, &c. And thus we shall in the end not only arrive at those ideas, which are termed simple, but shall find in every such analysis, that the doctrine of a twofold, of an external and internal origin of knowledge, is susceptible of abundant confirmation.—We finish this chapter with a few practical remarks on furnishing our minds with ideas.

§. 114. The mind should be furnished with a store of ideas.

As early as possible should the mind be furnished with a rich variety of thoughts. Although it be proper and oftentimes necessary, that persons should direct their attention more to some particular subject than others, yet no individual can be considered as possessed of a good education, who is not in some degree acquainted with many subjects. Our acquisitions are not to be limited to the affairs of our own country, but we are to become acquainted with the history of other nations also; and while there is much to be learnt, that is of modern origin, the records of antiquity ought not to be wholly neglected. We are to learn things both of a political and a religious kind; those, which have relation to the mechanic arts, the laws of nature, the intercourse of life, the principles of the mind, and on a variety of other subjects.—Some of the benefits of possessing a large fund of ideas, which are the elements or materials of our knowledge, are these.

It enables us to take a wide, and, therefore, in general more accurate view of subjects.

As to every science there are some things true and some things false, and we are constantly liable to err. It may, therefore, well be expected, that he who has a store of ideas in that science, which he can examine and compare together, stands so much the better. A man having his sentiments well balanced and composed, designing to pursue the study of law or of medicine, may be of the opinion, that a knowledge of metaphysics, of natural philosophy, or of the physiology of man, or of any other system, may be of no advantage to him, as a theologian, &c., but there are many things, it may be said, even if we admit the propriety of this opinion, of which we have no knowledge, of which may not be so particularly beneficial to one's chosen pursuit, but of which, nevertheless, it would be highly discreditable to be ignorant.

For example, a lawyer, who is quite familiar with the principles of his particular department, may sometimes find himself a little perplexed, even when debating in a court of law, in consequence of his ignorance of the chemical principles, and a judge has been known to be confused, in giving up a decision on a case of suspected murder, for want of a more intimate acquaintance with the philosophy of the human mind and its moral organization.

There is a second advantage, resulting from this more extensive and general acquaintance with things, viz. it tends, on the one hand, to preserve us from an excess of credulity or too readily believing every thing, which is too easily offered to us for our assent, and on the other, will be able to guard us from a positive, and dogmatical turn of mind.

There are many things, which at first sight appeared strange and incredible, but were afterwards found by us to be true.

The more extensive the range of our knowledge, the more shall we have found of instances of this kind. Hence when any thing is stated, however strange it may at first appear, we shall not be disposed to affirm or

deny in respect to it with dogmatism, but shall be willing to make further inquiries.

The more we know also in general, the more we shall consequently, know, in particular, of intentional deceptions, and of the various unavoidable causes of mistake in cases where it is only candour to suppose, that there is no intention to deceive. We shall thus be strengthened against the indulgence of an extreme credulity, as well as against a too positive and dogmatical spirit.

These are advantages, which are not to be lightly prized, and are a sufficient reason, why we should early attempt to furnish ourselves with many ideas on a variety of subjects, by our personal observation of what things take place around us, by self-examination, by reading judicious books, and by conversation.

NOTE. Those complex thoughts, which embrace ideas of relation, and which, consequently, are in part formed by the aid of the power or susceptibility of RELATIVE SUGGESTION, are more or less examined by writers on the Mind.—See Locke's Essay, Bk. II. CHS. XXV, XXVI. compared with the forty fifth and fiftieth of Brown's Lectures, Buffier's First Truths, Pt. II. CHS. XXVII, XXVIII.; Duncan's Elements, CH. IV. and other Treatises of Logic; Good's Book of Nature, Series III. LECT. IV.; also, in respect to furnishing the mind with ideas and on other points of mental discipline, Watt's Improvement of the Mind.

## CHAPTER TENTH.

### OF CONCEPTIONS.

Meaning of conceptions and how they differ from certain other states of the mind.

WE are now to consider the mind and its susceptibility in another view, viz. as employed in originating those mental states, which are usually called CONCEPTIONS. A name is given to those ideas, which we have of absent objects of perception, or of any sensations or feelings, which the mind has formerly felt. Whenever we form conceptions, our ideas are replaced, as Shakespeare expresses it, in the "mind's eye," without our at all being aware of what time or in what place they first originated. In other words, our ideas or mental states are replaced by nothing more.

Using, therefore, the term CONCEPTIONS to express a class of ideas, it may be sufficient, in order to give some notion of their distinctive character, to mention, how they differ from perceptions, and from ideas of memory.

They differ from perceptions, because the objects of them are absent. When we perceive any thing, an edifice, a landscape, or a mountain; the objects of our perceptions are before us. But we may form conceptions of them, and these may exist in "the mind's eye," however distant.

They differ also from ideas of memory, because they are not attended exclusively to any considerations of the past. But in every act of the memory there is an idea of the present. Hence, as those states of mind, to which we give the name of conceptions, possess these distinctive characteristics, they are entitled to a separate name.

CONCEPTIONS being merely mental states or acts of a particular kind are regulated by the general laws of the intellect, and make their appearance and disappearance on the principles of association. Those principles are to be fully explained hereafter.—Whenever at any time we may use the phrase “power of conception” or “faculty of conception,” nothing more is to be understood by such expressions than this, that there is in the mind a susceptibility of ideas possessing the marks, which we have ascribed to this class.

§. 116. Of conceptions of objects of sight.

One of the striking facts in regard to our conceptions is, that we can far more easily conceive the objects of some senses than of others. Suppose a person to have travelled abroad, and to have seen St. Peter's church and the Vatican, or to have visited the cataract of Niagara and the falls of St. Anthony, or any other interesting object of sight; it is well known that the mind of this person afterwards even for many years very readily forms a conception of those objects. Such ideas are so easily and so distinctly recalled, that it is hardly too much to say of them, that they seem to exist as permanent pictures in the mind. It is quite different with a particular sound, which we have formerly heard, and with a particular taste, or any pleasant or painful sensations of the touch, which we have formerly experienced. When the original perceptions have in these last cases departed, we find that the ideas do not readily exist again in the absence of their appropriate objects, and never with the distinctness, which they possessed at first. Ideas of visible objects, therefore, are more readily recalled, or we can more easily form conceptions of such objects than we can of the objects of the other senses.—This peculiarity in the case of visible objects may be thus partially explained.

Visible objects or rather the outlines of them are complex; that is, they are made up of a great number of parts or very small portions. Hence the conception, which we form of such an object as a whole, is aided by the principles

ies of association. The reason is obvious. As every original perception of a visible object is a compound, made up of many parts, whenever we subsequently have a conception of it, the process is the same; we have a conception of a part of the object, and the principles of association help us in conceiving of the other parts. Association connects the parts together; it presents them to the mind in their proper arrangement, and helps to sustain them there.

We are not equally aided by the laws of association in forming our conceptions of the objects of the other senses. When we think of some sound, or taste, or touch, the object of our conception is a single detached sensation. In every such sound or taste, or sensation of touch, whether we consider it at its first origin or when it is subsequently called, there is not that association of the parts, which we suppose to exist in every visual perception, and which must, of course, exist in every conception of objects of sight, which subsequently takes place. Accordingly our conceptions of the latter objects arise more readily, and are more distinct than of the others.\*

§. 117. Of the influence of habit on our conceptions.

It is another circumstance worthy of notice in regard to conceptions, that the power of forming them depends in some measure on habit.—In what sense we are to understand the terms power and faculty, when used in this connection, has already been explained; and as to the term HABIT, it is sufficient to say of it here, that it is the readiness or facility, whether bodily or mental, which we acquire by a frequent repetition of the same thing.

A few instances will help to illustrate the statement, but what is termed Habit may extend to the susceptibility

\* In these remarks we take for granted, that our perceptions of external visible objects are not immediate, but progressive. The mind passes from one part to another of the object, and does not embrace the whole at once. As this, though reasonable, may be considered too much like a mere assumption by some, it is suitable to remark here, that this subject will be examined in some subsequent pages.

of conceptions; and the first to be given will be of conceptions of sounds. Our conceptions of sounds are in general very indistinct, as appeared in the last section. But a person may acquire the power of amusing himself with reading written music. Having frequently associated the sounds with the notes, he has at last such a strong conception of the sounds, that he experiences, by merely reading the notes, a very sensible pleasure. It is for the same reason, viz., because our associations are strengthened by habit, that readers may enjoy the harmony of poetical numbers without at all articulating the words. In both cases they truly hear nothing, but there is a virtual melody in the mind.

That our power of forming conceptions is strengthened by habit is capable of being further illustrated from the sight. A person, who has been accustomed to drawing, retains a much more perfect notion of a building, landscape, or other visible object, than one who has not. A portrait painter, or any person, who has been in the practice of drawing such sketches, can trace the outlines of the human form with very great ease; it requires hardly more effort from them than to write their names.—This point may also be illustrated by the difference, which we sometimes notice in people in their conception of colours. Some are fully sensible of the difference between two colours when they are presented to them, but cannot with confidence give names to these colours when they see them apart, and may even confound the one with the other. Their original sensations or perceptions are supposed to be equally distinct with those of other persons; but their subsequent conception of the colours is far from being so. This defect arises partly at least from want of practice, that is, from the not having formed a habit. The persons, who exhibit this weakness of conception, have not been compelled by their situation nor by mere inclination to distinguish and to name colours so much as is common.

§. 118. Of the subserviency of our conceptions to description.

It is highly favourable to the talent for lively descrip-

1, when a person's conceptions are readily suggested  
 1 are distinct. Even such an one's common conversa-  
 1 differs from that of those, whose conceptions arise  
 e slowly and are more faint.—One man, whether in  
 version or in written description, seems to place the  
 ct, which he would give us an idea of, directly before  
 it is represented distinctly and to the life. Another,  
 ough not wanting in a command of language, is confu-  
 and embarrassed amid a multitude of particulars, which  
 onsequence of the feebleness of his conceptions he  
 s himself but half acquainted with ; and he, therefore,  
 s us but a very imperfect notion of the thing, which  
 would describe.

It has been by some supposed, that a person might  
 1 a happier description of an edifice, of a landscape, or  
 r object, from the conception than from the actual  
 ception of it. The perfection of a description does  
 always consist in a minute specification of circumstan-  
 ; in general the description is better, when there is a  
 cious selection of them. The best rule for making the  
 ction is, to attend to the particulars, that make the  
 pest impression on our own minds, or, what is the same  
 g, that most readily and distinctly take a place in our  
 ceptions.—When the object is actually before us, it is  
 emely difficult to compare the impressions, which dif-  
 at circumstances produce. When we afterwards con-  
 e the object, we possess merely the outline of it ; but  
 an outline made up of the most striking circumstan-  
 . Those circumstances, it is true, will not impress all  
 ous alike, but will somewhat vary with the degree of  
 ir taste. But when with a correct and delicate taste  
 one combines lively conceptions, and gives a des-  
 ction from those conceptions, he can hardly fail to suc-  
 d in it.

§ 119. Of conceptions attended with a momentary belief.

Our conceptions are sometimes attended with belief ;  
 n they are very lively, we are apt to ascribe to their  
 cts a real existence or believe in them. It is not as-



serted by us, that the belief is permanent; but a number of facts strongly lead to the conclusion, that it has a momentary existence.—(1) A painter in drawing the features and bodily form of an absent friend, may have so strong a conception, so vivid a mental picture, as to believe for a moment that his friend is before him. After carefully recalling his thoughts at such times and reflecting upon them, almost every painter is ready to say, that he has experienced some illusions of this kind. It is true, the illusion is very short, because the intensity of conception, which is the foundation of it, can never be kept up long when the mind is in a sound state. Such intense conceptions are unnatural. And, further, all the surrounding objects of perception, which no one can altogether disregard for any length of time, every now and then check the illusion and terminate it.—(2) Place a person on the battlements of a high tower; his reason tells him he is in no danger; he knows he is in none. But after all he is unable to look down from the battlements without fear; his conceptions are so exceedingly vivid as to induce a momentary belief of danger in opposition to all his reasonings.—(3) There are persons who are entirely convinced of the folly of the popular belief of ghosts and other nightly apparitions, but who cannot be persuaded to sleep in a room alone, nor go alone into a room in the dark. Whenever they happen out at night, they are constantly looking on every side; their quickened conceptions behold images which never had any existence except in their own minds, and they are the subjects of continual disquiet and even terror.

“It was my misfortune, (says Dr. Priestly,) to have the idea of darkness, and the ideas of invisible malignant spirits and apparitions very closely connected in my fancy; and to this day, notwithstanding I believe nothing of those invisible powers, and consequently of their connection with darkness, or any thing else, I cannot be perfectly easy in every kind of situation in the dark, though I am sensible I gain ground upon this prejudice continually.

In all such cases we see the influence of the prejudice of the nursery. Persons, who are thus afflicted, are

taught in early childhood to form conceptions of ghosts, hobgoblins, and unearthly spirits ; and the habit still continues. It is true, when they listen to their reasonings and philosophy, they may well say that they do not believe in such things. But the effect of their philosophy is merely to check their belief ; not in one case in a thousand is the belief entirely overcome. Every little while, in all solitary places, and especially in the dark, it returns and when banished returns again ; otherwise we cannot give an explanation of the conduct of these persons.

§. 120. Conceptions which are joined with perceptions.

The belief in our mere conceptions is the more evident and striking, whenever they are at any time joined with our perceptions. A person walking in a field in a thick foggy morning perceives something, no matter what it is ; but he believes it to be a man, and does not doubt it. In other words, he truly perceives some object, and, in addition to that perception, has a mental conception of a man attended with belief. When he has advanced a few feet farther, all at once he perceives, that what he conceived to be a man is merely a stump with a few large stones piled on its top. He perceived at first, as plainly or but little short of it, that it was a stump, as in a moment afterwards ; there were the whole time very nearly the same visible form and the same dimensions in his eye. But whatever he had in his eye, he certainly had in his mind the conception of a man, which overruled and annulled the natural effects of the visual perception ; the conception being associated with a present visible object acquiring peculiar strength and permanency, so much so that he truly and firmly believed, that a human being was before him. But the conception has departed ; the present object of perception has taken its place, and it is now impossible for him to conjure up the phantom, the reality of which he but just now had no doubt of.—Many a person has waked up in the night and has firmly believed, that he saw a form clothed in white standing in an erect position at some part of the room, but in a moment after

the imaginary visitant has vanished, and there is nothing left but the reflection of the moonbeams on the wall.—In cases of this kind, where the conceptions are upheld, as it were, by present objects of perception, and receive a sort of permanency from them, nothing is better known, than that we often exercise a strong and unhesitating belief. These instances, therefore, can properly be considered as illustrating & confirming the views in the preceding section.

§. 121. Of our conceptions at tragical representations.

These observations suggest an explanation, at least in part, of the effects, which are produced on the mind by exhibitions of fictitious distress. In the representation of tragedies, it must be admitted, that there is a general conviction of the whole being but a fiction. But, although persons enter the theatre with this general conviction, it does not always remain with them the whole time. At certain passages in the poet peculiarly interesting, and at certain exhibitions of powerful and well timed effort in the actor, this general impression, that all is a fiction, fails. The feelings of the spectator may be said to rush into the scenes; he mingles in the events; carried away and lost he for a moment believes all to be real, and the tears gush at the catastrophe which he witnesses. The explanation therefore, of the emotions felt at the exhibition of a tragedy, such as indignation, pity, and abhorrence, is, that at certain parts of the exhibition we have a momentary belief in the reality of the events, which are represented. And after the illustrations which have been given, such a belief cannot be considered impossible.—The same explanation will apply to the emotions, which follow our reading of tragedies when alone, or any other natural and affecting descriptions. In the world of conceptions, which the genius of the writer conjures up, we are transported out of the world of real existence, and for a while fully believe in the reality of what is only an incantation.

§. 122. Application of these principles to diversities in the mental character of individuals.

It is a remark sometimes made, that the sanguine are apt to believe and assert what they hope; and the timorous

rous what they fear. This remark implies, and is founded in part on what every one knows, that there are diversities in the intellectual character of different individuals. Some are constitutionally fearful; every obstacle assumes an undue importance, and every terror is magnified. Others are confident, fearless, ardent. Both of these classes of persons are known to commit frequent mistakes in judging of those things, which are future, and which have any connection with their respective mental characteristics.

The remarks, which were made in the three last sections, will help us to an explanation in this thing.—As to what is called BELIEF, it is presumed no one can be ignorant of it, although it would be futile to attempt to explain it by words. It is, however, important to remark, that belief is regulated and controlled, not by direct volition, but by the nature of the circumstances, which are placed before the mind. But it has been already sufficiently shown, that belief is in a measure under the control of our conceptions, when they are very vivid. It is also undoubtedly true, that vividness of conceptions is always attended with a strong feeling of pleasure, or of desire, or of some other kind. But it is implied in the mental characters of the persons, on whom we are remarking, that their feelings are strong, though opposite; in the one case, confident and ardent; in the other, dejected and timid.

Hence their conceptions will be strong. To the one, all difficulties and dangers will be magnified; to the other, the glory and the fruition of success. And as these distorted conceptions necessarily control more or less their belief, it will follow, that perfect reliance is not to be placed on their opinions, when they are directly connected either with their hopes or their fears. Nor will such distrust always imply an unfavourable opinion of the rectitude of their intentions.—Reid's *Essays on the Intellectual Powers*, IV.; Stewart's *Elements*, CH. III.; Brown's *Lectures*, XLI.; Priestley's *Examination of Reid*, SECT. VIII.

## CHAPTER ELEVENTH.

### PARTICULAR AND GENERAL ABSTRACT IDEAS.

#### §. 123. Origin of abstractions and kinds of them.

**T**HE remarks, which have been hitherto made on our perceptions of present objects, and on our conceptions of those, which are absent, open the way for the consideration of our mental states in another respect, viz., as they are affected by the process of abstraction. By means of that process, they become abstracted or separated; that is, they are made subjects of consideration apart from other ideas, with which they are ordinarily found to be associated. And hence, whenever this is the case in respect to the states of the mind, they are sometimes called abstractions, and still more frequently are known by the name of ABSTRACT IDEAS. They may be divided into the two kinds of particular and general abstract ideas, which are clearly distinct from each other, not only in themselves considered, but also as respects the intellectual processes, by means of which they exist.

#### §. 124. Of the class of particular abstract ideas.

We shall first remark on particular abstract ideas. Of this class the different kinds of colours may be mentioned as instances. When any absent object of perception occurs to us, when we think of or form a conception of it, our thoughts will sometimes fix upon the colour of such object, and make that the subject of consideration, without particularly regarding its other qualities, such as weight

hardness, taste, form, &c. We may also distinguish in any body its solidity from its extension, or we may direct our attention to its weight, or its length, or breadth, or thickness, and make any one of these a distinct object in our thoughts, even when it is impossible to separate them in the subject, to which they belong.

And hence, as it is a well known fact, that the properties of any body may be separated in the view and examination of the mind, however close and indissoluble their intimacy in their appropriate subjects, we may lay down this statement in respect to the states of mind before us. When any quality or attribute of an object, which does not exist by itself, but always in a state of combination, is detached by our minds from its customary associates, and is considered separately, it becomes a particular abstract idea.—The distinctive mark of this class is, that the abstraction is always limited to one quality.

#### §. 125. Of the formation of particular abstract ideas.

The manner of expressing ourselves on the subject of our abstract notions, to which we have been accustomed, is apt to create and cherish a belief in the existence of a separate mental faculty, adapted solely to this particular purpose. But the doctrine of a power or faculty of abstraction, which is exclusive of other mental susceptibilities, and is employed solely for this purpose, does not appear to be well founded. It will convey an impression nearer the truth to speak of the process, rather than the power of abstraction.—The following statement will be sufficient to show, how those of the first class, or particular abstract ideas are formed.

Although our earliest notions, whether they arise from the senses or are of an internal origin, are simple, or exist in what may be called a state of decomposition, yet these simple thoughts are very soon found to unite together with a considerable degree of permanency, and out of them are formed complex states of mind. All our ideas are recalled to the mind in the absence of their appropri-

ate objects by the principles of association ; nor does it seem altogether unreasonable to say, that the separate parts of all our complex notions are held together in their state of combination by the same principles. It is at least certain, that complex states of mind involve and imply the existence of elementary ones ; and that the selection of these elements and their virtual admission into the complex mental state in preference to others is owing to the power of association. And the question is, how this principle of combination is to be loosened, and they are to be extracted from their present complexity, and reduced to their elementary state ? In answer it may be said, that in every case of separating a particular abstract idea, there must necessarily be a co-existent feeling of interest, choice, or desire. This feeling must concern the previous complex state of the mind when viewed in one respect, rather than another ; or what is the same thing, it will concern one part of the complex idea rather than another. So that we may truly and justly be said to have a desire to consider or examine some part of the complex idea more particularly than the others. When the mind is in this high degree directed to any particular part of a complex idea, we find it to be the fact, that the principle of association, or whatever it is, which keeps the other parts in their state of virtual union with it, ceases in a corresponding degree to operate ; they rapidly fall off and disappear, and the particular quality or attribute, towards which the mind was especially directed, remains the sole subject of consideration. That is to say, it is abstracted or becomes an abstract idea.

This, in the formation of particular abstract ideas, seems to be the process of the mind, and nothing more ; viz., (1) The recurrence or suggestion of the complex idea by the power of association ; (2) The co-existence of a feeling of desire or choice in respect to some particular part of it ; (3) The consequent detention of the part, towards which an interest is felt, and the disappearance of the other parts.—Such is the activity of the mind, and in so many ways it views the “ images of things,” that this striking

process of detaching, and examining, and replacing, and changing the parts of our complex notions, is almost constantly going on. And after the mind has thus shifted its position, and has been now in this state and now in that, as if playfully to show its wonderful readiness in diminishing itself to a part of its previous complexity, it seems as readily to swell back again, if we may be allowed in such figurative expressions, to its former dimensions, and exists the same as before the process of abstraction commenced.

§. 126. Of generalizations of particular abstract ideas.

When we speak of the generalizing of this class of abstract ideas, it seems to be chiefly meant, that in our experience of things we observe them to be common to many subjects. We find whiteness to be a quality of snow, of chalk, of milk, and of other bodies; and whenever with the simple abstract notion of whiteness we connect in our thoughts the additional circumstance of its not being limited to one body but the property of many, the term may be said to be generalized. And this seems to be all, that can be properly understood by generalization when applied to the states of mind, which we are now considering.

§. 127. Of particular abstractions in poetry, painting, &c.

The process of abstraction, which is gone through in the formation of particular abstract ideas, is greatly subservient to the exertions of a creative imagination, as they appear in painting, poetry, and the other fine arts.—The poet and the painter are supplied with their materials from experience; without having received ideas from some source, they never could have practised their art. But if they do not restrict themselves to mere imitation, they do combine and modify the ideas which they have, so as to be able to form new creations of their own. But every creation of this kind, which they make, of their powers, supposes the exercise of abstraction in decomposing and reuniting actual conceptions and in forming them anew.



## -§. 128. Of general abstract ideas.

We are now to remark upon the second class of abstractions.—GENERAL ABSTRACT IDEAS, which is the name commonly applied to them, are our notions of the classes, or genera and species of objects, such as are expressed by the general names, man, bird, sheep, fish, animal, tree.

As they include classes, it is hardly necessary to observe, that we cannot possess them without first considering two or more objects together. We may form, on the contrary, those of the first class or particular abstract ideas by considering individual objects merely.

Whenever, therefore, we see a number of trees of the same kind, or a number of flowers, or of men, or of horses, or sheep, the mind immediately exists in that state, which, when we think fit to give it a name, we call a general abstract idea.

This general idea, however, does not embrace every particular, which makes a part of the individuals before us; it leaves out of consideration certain peculiarities, which belong to each tree, each flower, man, &c. when separately considered. And this is the reason of ideas of this kind being called abstract; because, although they embrace the whole number of individuals in certain respects, they detach and leave out altogether a variety of particulars in which they disagree.—As soon, therefore, as we perceive a number of objects before us of the same kind, we at once virtually dismiss from our view these circumstances of disagreement, and the mind exists, as above remarked, in a new state, which is essentially a feeling of resemblance. So that those mental states, which when put into words may be called feelings or immediate mental discoveries of the relation of resemblance in a number of objects, constitute what we understand by general abstract ideas, and these, as far as the mind is concerned and leaving out the names, are the true ideas of genera and species.—But as a question may arise in the minds of some in regard to this feeling of resemblance, it is proper, in order to meet any such inquiries, briefly to remark further.

## §. 129. Of relative suggestions or perceptions of relations.

Nothing is more evident than that the objects, which we perceive, are in some way compared, one with another; and that we learn, when such comparisons take place, how they conform to each other or how they differ. We compare objects together in respect to their position, their resemblance and difference, degrees, and in a great variety of respects, as was particularly seen at chapter ninth in the remarks there made on IDEAS OF RELATION. This is conformable to the general experience of men.—There is necessarily implied in every such comparison the existence of certain new states of the mind, which may be called ideas of relation or feelings of relation, and which are essentially different from our simple perceptions or conceptions of the objects, that sustain the relation. But the inquiry arises, By virtue of what principle is this discovery of relations made? The answer is, that there is in the mind an original tendency or susceptibility, by means of which, whenever we perceive different objects together, we are instantly, without the intervention of any other mental process, sensible of their relation in certain respects.

We may here give an illustration of the exercise of this original susceptibility, similar, however, to those already given. When a number of objects are together, belonging to the same species, as two or more sheep, or horses, or men, or trees, or flowers, the mind immediately exists in that state, which constitutes the feeling of resemblance.—Here beside the mere perception of the objects we experience a feeling of relation, since that resemblance in the objects before us, of which we are conscious, is one of the many kinds of relation, of the perception of which the mind has been asserted to be originally susceptible. It is by means of this original susceptibility of relations, as it exhibits itself in particular in the perception of the relation of resemblance, that the whole of that class, which we term *general abstract ideas*, are formed. None we imagine can be formed without it.

All this we know is to be decided, not by the opinions and assertions of an individual, but by the general

experience. In any doctrines, which are laid down in regard to the mind, every person has a right to give his testimony; and whenever that testimony is a correct representation of the intellectual processes, it is valuable whatever may be its tendency. But it is confidently thought, that nothing more is wanted, than an appeal to what men generally find themselves conscious of, to confirm the above views.

§. 130. Of classifications of objects.

In the classification of objects and in giving general names, the process after what has been said cannot be thought to be either long or difficult.—The first step is the perception of two or more objects, which constitute one state of mind. The second is the feeling of resemblance, which is the general idea. Guided by the feeling of resemblance, we are enabled to say, what objects come within the limits of a particular class, and what do not. The names, which are given to general ideas, are variously called by different writers, sometimes general names sometimes general or common nouns in distinction from proper nouns, and sometimes GENERA and SPECIES.

§. 131. Of general abstract ideas in connection with numbers, &c.

The ability, which the mind possesses of forming general abstract ideas, is of much practical importance; but whether it be the characteristic attribute of a rational nature or not, as some have supposed, it is not necessary now to inquire. Its subserviency in the forming of classifications has already been seen.—And it is further to be remarked, that without that mental susceptibility, by which we form general notions, we should not be able to number, even in the smallest degree. Before we can consider objects as forming a multitude, or are able to number them, it seems necessary to be able to apply to them a common name. This we cannot do, until we have reduced them to a genus; and the formation of a genus implies a mental susceptibility of feeling the relation of resemblance. Consequently, we should be unable without such mental

ability to number.—How great then is the importance of that intellectual property, by which abstractions are formed!—Without the ability to , we should be at a loss in all investigations where lity is required ; without the power to classify, all culations must be limited to particulars, and we be capable of no general reasoning.

132. Of the speculations of philosophers and others.

re is a characteristic difference between the spec- of philosophers and those of the common mass of worthy of some notice. The difference between is not so much, that philosophers are accustomed on processes of reasoning to a greater extent, as at they are more in the habit of employing general ideas and general terms, and that, consequently, clusions which they form are more comprehensive.

their general reasonings, although the conclusions h they arrive seem in their particular applications ate wonderful fertility of invention, so difficult in ormance as is apt to be supposed. They have so d so long looked at general ideas and general ions, have been so accustomed, as one may say, to plate the general nature of things, divested of all ous and all specific circumstances, that they have a *habit* ; and the operation is performed without y. It requires in such persons no greater intellec- rt, than would be necessary in skilfully managing ils of ordinary business.

speculations of the great bulk of mankind differ se of philosophers in being, both in the subjects and in their results, particular. They discover an r to enlarge their view to universal propositions, mbrace a great number of individuals. They may the power of mere argument, of comparing propo- togethcr which concern particulars, and deducing es from them to a great degree ; but when they to contemplate general propositions, their minds plexed, and the conclusions, which are drawn from

them, appear obscure, however clearly the previous process of reasoning may have been expressed.

§. 133. Of different opinions formerly prevailing.

The subject of general abstract ideas, of which we have given a summary view, excited very considerable interest during the scholastic ages; and different opinions have prevailed concerning them, not only at that period, but more or less down to the present time. The disputes so widely prevailed, and so much interest was taken, that it seems to be necessary to give a short sketch of them.

In this discussion there have been three parties, viz. the Realists, the Nominalists, and the Conceptualists.)

§. 134. Of the opinions of the Realists.

Those, who go under this name, held, that general abstract ideas have a real and permanent existence, independent of the mind. Of a man, of a rose, of a circle, and of every species of things, they maintained, that there is one original form or archetype, which existed from eternity, before any individuals of the species were created. This original model or archetype is the pattern, according to which the individuals of all species are in the most important respects formed. The archetype, which is understood to embrace only the outlines or generic features of things, becomes an object of perception to the human intellect, whenever by due abstraction we discern it to be one and the same in all the individuals of the species.—Such was the doctrine of the Realists, which in its most essential respects was very widely received from the time of Plato and Aristotle down to the commencement of the 12th century. But since that period, excepting a few ineffectual attempts, which have been made from time to time to revive it, it has fallen into as general disrepute, on the ground of its being too hypothetical and not sufficiently sustained by facts.

§. 135. Of the opinions of the Nominalists.

About the commencement of the 12th century, Roscoe

the instructor of Abelard, whose name occupies so conspicuous a place in the history of scholastic learning, held a new hypothesis. He maintained, not only that there are no original forms or archetypes, such as had asserted to exist by the Realists, but that there are no abstract ideas of any kind. On the contrary, it was to have been his opinion, as well as the sentiment of those who have subsequently approved of this doctrine, that nothing can be called general or universal but names, and even to them universality can be ascribed only virtually and not in the strict and literal sense of the term.—The names are in the first instance given to individuals, but when any individuals are specified, the nature of the mind is such, that we naturally and immediately associate other individuals of the same kind. So that names are in fact particular, although owing to the association, which we now term association, the practical effect is the same as if it were otherwise, and hence the epithets “general” and “universal” are applied to them. The opinion in respect to general ideas and names, or the doctrine essentially of this description has found many advocates from the days of Roscelinus and Abelard down to those of Berkeley and Dugald Stewart.

§. 136. Of the opinions of the Conceptualists.

Those, who hold to the actual existence of general abstract ideas, which are not permanent archetypes independent of the mind, but only states of the mind, have been called Conceptualists. We have already given an account of the opinion which they suppose to be the true mental process in the formation of such ideas. Whether we can have such ideas decided by each one's personal experience; and whether the examination of his internal experience is consistent with care, it can hardly be doubted, in what way the question will be generally answered.

As far as the Realists are concerned, the mere statement of their doctrine is sufficient at the present day to invite its immediate rejection. The question lies then between the Nominalists, and those who have commonly

been called Conceptualists; and if there be insuperable objections to the doctrine of the former, that of the latter enhances its claims on our adoption.

Some of the objections to the sentiment of Roscelinus and those who have thought with him are forcibly summed up in the following passage from Brown's *Philosophy of the Mind*.

"Of that rigid Nominalism, which involves truly no mixture of Conceptualism or of the belief of those feelings of relation for which I have contended, but denies altogether the existence of that peculiar class of feelings, or states of mind which have been denominated general notions, or general ideas, asserting the existence only of individual objects perceived, and of general terms that comprehend these, without any peculiar mental state denoted by the general term, distinct from those separate sensations or perceptions which the particular objects, comprehended under the term, might individually excite,—it seems to me that the very statement of the opinion itself is almost sufficient confutation, since the very invention of the general term, and the extension of it to certain objects only, not to all objects, implies some reason for this limitation, and some feeling of general agreement of the objects included in the class, to distinguish them from the objects not included in it, which is itself that very general notion professedly denied. As long as some general notion of circumstances of resemblance is admitted, I see very clearly how a general term may be most accurately limited; but if this general notion be denied, I confess that I cannot discover any principle of limitation whatever. Why have certain objects been classed together, and not certain other objects, when all have been alike perceived by us; and all, therefore, if there be nothing more than mere perception in the process, are capable of receiving any denomination which we may please to bestow on them? Is it arbitrarily and without any reason whatever, that we do not class a rose-bush with birds, or an elephant with fish? and if there be any reason for these exclusions, why will not the Nominalist tell us what that reason is—in what feeling

and—and how it can be made accordant with his? Must it not be that the rose-bush and a sparrow, equally perceived by us, do not excite that generation of resemblance which the term *bird* is invented to express—do not seem to us to have those relations of a common nature, in certain respects, which lead us to class the sparrow and the ostrich, however different in other respects as birds; or the petty natives of our brooks and the mighty monsters of the deep, under one common and equal denomination? If this be the reason, it is more, in every case, than perception, and the giving of a general name; for there is a peculiar state of a general relative feeling—intervening between perception and the invention of the term, which is the only reason that can be assigned for that very invention. Can the Nominalist then assert, that there is no feeling of the resemblance of objects, in certain respects, which thus intervenes between the perception of them as separate objects, which is one stage of the process, and the apprehension of them under a single name, which is the next stage of the process,—or must he not rather confess that it is merely in consequence of this intervening feeling we give to the number of objects their genuine name, to the exclusion of the multitudes of objects which we do not apply it, as it is in consequence of other feelings, excited by them individually, we give to each separate object its proper name, to the exclusion of every other object? To repeat the process, as I have described to you, we perceive two or more objects, are struck with their resemblance in certain respects. We invent a general name to denote this feeling of resemblance, and we class under this general name; every particular object, the perception of which is followed by the feeling of resemblance, and no object but these alone. This may be a faithful statement of the process,—and for this I may safely appeal to your consciousness,—the doctrine of the Nominalists is not less false than that of the Realists. (It is false, because it excludes that general feeling of resemblance,—the relative suggestion,—which



and the word "general" cannot be truly designated, and that the word "universal" never would have been invented. While the doctrine of the Germans is false, by inserting in the world some supposed separate entities, which have no real existence. The one truth, as I have already said, is that the word "general" is arbitrary.

#### OF THE HISTORY OF MISANTHROPICAL OPINIONS.

IN CONNECTION WITH THE VIEW, which has here been given of the general opinions on the subject of general ideas, we are enabled to trace the progress of certain histories of philosophical opinions in general. Although the great principles of philosophical philosophy are for the most part well settled, and whatever discrepancies apparently exist, are owing to a multiplicity of cases rather to differences of circumstance than to differences of belief: still it is sometimes necessary to go a little back and see what has in former times been said and thought: an exercise, which cannot fail to expose the strength of prejudices, the many errors to which the understanding is exposed, and the necessity of cultivating a sincere love of truth.—In the following pages will be found various historical and critical remarks concerning the dispute on general or universal ideas, as also the history of other philosophical controversies and opinions almost without number. The greater part of them at present excite not the least interest, except as memorials of the struggle of the human mind in past ages.

(1) *Bayle's Historical and Critical Dictionary.*—This work was first published in two folio volumes in 1697. It consists of two parts; one of which is a concise narration of facts, and the other a sort of commentary on them. The work contains very numerous illustrations of the history of philosophy, and treats many difficult subjects with independence and ability. It has, however, this serious disadvantage, that the writer appears to have been wanting in those strict moral and religious principles, without which it is impossible even for the most extensive literary attainments to secure respect, and still less, to be the means of permanent usefulness.

*Brucker's Critical History of Philosophy.*—This was first published at Leipsic in 1774 in Latin, extending through five quarto volumes. The author gives a philosophical sketch of the lives of different ancient and modern philosophers, reviews their writings, and explains their various systems. This history, the result of fifty years' study of a hard student, is particularly valuable, as a book of reference for those, who have devoted themselves to philosophical researches. There has been published an abridged translation of it into English by Enfield.

*M. De Gerando's History of Philosophical Systems,* published in 1802, is in French, but is frequently resorted to by English writers on these subjects. M. De Gerando does not undertake to give a complete account of the progress of intellectual science; his main object is to be to recapitulate the opinions of the most eminent and modern philosophers on a particular point, viz., the sources and certainty of knowledge. His history is divided into five periods.—The first period commences at the time anterior to Socrates; the second comes to the age of Cicero; in the third, which ends with the close of the seventh century, we have an account of the decline and fall of philosophy; the fourth reaches from the seventh century to the time of Des Cartes and his followers; the fifth and last continues the subject to the present century.\*

*Stewart's Progress of Metaphysical, Ethical, and Political Philosophy.*—This work originally appeared in the form of a Preliminary Dissertation to the supplemental volume of the Encyclopædia Britannica; and includes the period since the revival of letters in Europe. The reason for limiting his retrospect to a period extending no further back than the revival of letters, the

knowledge of the French language is so common, that they may well be supposed to be accessible to many English readers; that this is not the only reason for mentioning it here. It has been translated into a number of languages; and is of such a nature, as naturally to lead one to anticipate, that it may soon appear in popular dress.

writer expresses an opinion, that the sciences, of which treats, present but little matter for useful remark, prior the time of Lord Bacon.—Perhaps no one of the publications of Mr. Stewart is more worthy the student's attention than this; whether we consider the richness and ease of his style, or that admirable discrimination, with which he detects the characteristic traits both of writers and of systems.—There are also, both in the English and foreign languages, other works, and treatises of greater or less extent and value, which may profitably be referred to, in examining the history of philosophical opinion. A particular account of many of them is given in the work of De Gerando, PT. I. CH. II.

NOTE. On the particular subject of universal or general abstract ideas, see Des Cartes, PRINCIPIA, PT. I. §. 59.; Berkeley's Principles of Human Knowledge, INTRODUCTION. §. 9—22.; Brucker's History of Philosophy, BK. VI. CH. III. §. 2.; Bayle, ART. Abelard, Note C.; De Gerando's Systems of Philosophy (*Histoire Comparee*) PT. I. CH. XXVI, XXVIII.; Locke's Essay, BK. III. CH. III. §. 9., BK. IV. CH. VII. §. 9.; Adam Smith's Ancient Logic and Metaphysics; Stewart's Elements, CH. IV.; Brown's Philosophy of the Mind, LECT. XLVII.

## CHAPTER TWELFTH.

### LANGUAGE. (I) NATURAL SIGNS.

§. 136. Our mental states are to be made known.

It is clearly the intention of Providence, that our internal experiences, our thoughts and feelings shall be communicated to others. The saying is not more common than true, that man is not born for himself alone. Not only his friends, but his country, and the whole human race possess an interest in him. Hence not merely our thoughts and feelings in themselves considered, but the mode, in which they are to be communicated from one individual to another, becomes an interesting subject of enquiry. The mode, or rather the instrument, by means of which this communication takes place, is LANGUAGE in its various forms.

We accordingly interrupt for a few chapters the direct history of the origin, combination, and laws of thought, in order to examine its signs. This is a subject so intimately connected with the theory and effectual action of the intellect, as to claim and receive an undisputed place in the philosophy of the mind.—We use the term Language in its most general sense, as standing for all signs of thought; and, therefore, shall consider it under the most striking forms of Natural signs, Oral or spoken signs, and written signs.

30. Thoughts first expressed by gestures and the countenance.

We are first to consider NATURAL SIGNS, or such as a person would use, who was incapable of employing either

converse together, it is reasonable to suppose that they would gradually abridge their natural signs for the sake of despatch, and would content themselves with *hinting* at those movements, which could be easily anticipated from the commencement; and in this manner might raise those apparently arbitrary marks of assent and dissent, which have just been mentioned."

§. 140. Illustrations of the great power of natural signs.

It seems to have been wisely and kindly ordered, that there should be a Natural language. The beneficent results of this provision cannot be misunderstood in the case of persons, who are by some accident cast among a people, whose oral or written language is unknown; and especially in its connection with the DEAF and DUMB. These persons come to their instructors, ignorant, speechless, wanting in confidence. The pupil and instructor have never before seen each other, and they are unable to communicate, either by means of speech, or of written signs. But nature speaks in the dialect of the countenance and of action; they comprehend each other's meaning; the pupil enters on his course of instruction, and in a single year learns by the aid of signs the meaning of thousands of words. This is unquestionably ascribing great efficacy to natural signs; but not greater than seems to be warranted by the following authentic statements.

"In the summer of 1818, a Chinese young man passed through Hartford, Connecticut, in which place there is an asylum for the education of the deaf and dumb. He was so ignorant of the English language that he could not express in it his most common wants. The principal of the asylum invited the stranger to spend an evening within its walls, and introduced him to Mr. Laurent Clerc, the celebrated deaf-and-dumb pupil of the Abbé Sicard, and at that time an assistant teacher in the asylum. The object of this introduction was, to ascertain to what extent Mr. Clerc, who was entirely ignorant of the Chinese language, could conduct an intelligent conversation with the foreigner, by signs and gestures merely. The result of the

led to invent, either by their wants, or because they have found pleasure in the employment. But this system is founded in nature ; it employs those elements of expression, which God has given to all mankind, and seldom goes beyond mere bodily movements, and the language of the looks.—There have been instances of a number of individuals in the same family, unable to hear or to articulate. It is exceedingly pleasing to witness their quickness of invention in framing their vocabulary of gestures, and their readiness in conversing with each other by means of them. They interpret an inclination of the head, a movement of the hand or arm, a contraction of the muscles of the face, even the slightest motion of the finger, as readily as another person, who is able to hear, can interpret the most familiar names, with which he has been acquainted from infancy.—What a striking declaration do we here have, that in the defect of oral and written signs of thought, nature has a resource, which is antecedent to all other forms of language !

There are some slight gestures, which appear to be arbitrary, but which are found to be susceptible of being traced back and resolved into others. Mr. Stewart remarks, that an instructor of Deaf and Dumb informed him, that his pupils, (whatever part of the country they came from,) agreed in most instances, in expressing assent by holding up the thumb, and dissent by holding up the little finger. “It can be explained (he observes) only by supposing, that these gestures are abbreviations of those signs, by which assent and dissent are generally expressed in the language of nature ; and, in truth, the process by which they were introduced may be easily conceived. For, the natural sign of assent is to throw the body open, by moving the hand from the breast with the palm towards the body and the thumb uppermost. The natural sign of dissent is the same movement, with the back of the hand towards the body, and the little finger uppermost. The former conveys the idea of cordiality, of good humour, and of inviting frankness ; the latter of dislike and aversion. If two dumb persons were left to

trymen worshipped idols, and sacrificed human victims; how the women were treated by the men; what was the climate of his country; what its productions; with many inquiries of a similar nature, all of which he well comprehended, and to many of which he replied by signs. The meaning, too, of a number of Owhyhean words was ascertained by signs merely, and found to correspond with the import, which had been previously assigned to them in a dictionary which had been for some time preparing in the school; and indeed, in a variety of instances, the most correct meaning of such words was established, by the medium of signs, in a more satisfactory way than had been previously attempted. Throughout this conversation the heathen youths appeared to take a deep interest, and to have a peculiar aptitude, both in comprehending the signs which were proposed to them, and in inventing such as were necessary for a reply.

“On the testimony of several of the South-Sea islanders, it appeared, that not a few of the signs employed in the instruction of the deaf and dumb, are precisely the same which their countrymen use to supply the deficiency of, or to give emphasis to, their own comparatively barren language;—a fact which had indeed been anticipated, from the circumstance so often observed by the teachers of the deaf and dumb among their pupils, that mutes who meet for the first time are able to understand each other fully on many common topics; the Author of nature having laid the foundation in the very constitution of our species, and in the structure and processes of the visible creation, for a universal expression of the same ideas, on a vast variety of subjects, by similar signs.”\*

§. 141. Of the art of Pantomime among the Romans.

The Ancients understood the power and extensive application of natural signs. In the art of PANTOMIME, which was in high favour among them, thoughts were exhibited by gesture and the countenance merely, without words.

\* T. H. Gallaudet's *Essays on the Language of signs in the* (London) *Christian Observer*, Sept. and Oct. 1826.

the Romans employed three systems of gestures, one for tragedy, another for comedy, and a third for such satirical poems, as were thought to be suited for public exhibitions. There were actors in pantomime, (among the names of Pylades and Bathillus have come down to us) who made it their whole business to address the people in this species of dumb show, and they succeeded in making themselves understood.—It was before systems of gestures were fully agreed upon, as signs of thought, that pantomime had come to be an art, that the contest between Cicero and Roscius, which has been so often mentioned, took place. — Cicero pronounced a period, which he had composed; Roscius followed and gave the meaning in action; Cicero varied his expressions, and Roscius readily varied his gestures. And whether Cicero with his could convey the meaning with more exactness and basis, than Roscius could without them, has been long a question.\*

§ 142. Of the system of signs existing among the North American Savages.

It is an interesting fact in relation to the present subject, that a system of natural signs is affirmed, on the most respectable authority, to exist among the Savage tribes throughout North America, which is universally understood by them. A considerable catalogue of these signs has been given to the public by persons, who have travelled and resided among the aboriginal inhabitants, and thus had ample opportunities of knowing. The following are instances.

(1) SUN. The fore-finger and thumb are brought together at tip so as to form a circle, and held up towards the sun's track. To indicate any particular time of the

Notwithstanding the inroads, which, in civilized society, have been made in modern times on natural language, there are still some signs of it to be met with.—For instance, the shaking of hands is understood to denote cordiality; rising up, on a person's entering a room, is indicative of respect; the ceremony of bowing indicates the same thing; and in conversation a shake of the head intimates doubt or dissent, while an inclination of it or nod expresses, that we agree with the speaker.



## LANGUAGE. (I. NATURAL SIGNS.

1. The hand with the sign of the sun is stretched towards the east horizon, and then gradually elevated, to show the ascent of that luminary, until the hand arrives in proper direction to indicate the part of the heavens which the sun will be at the given time.—(2) NIGHT SLEEPING. The head, with the eyes closed, is laterally inclined for a moment upon the hand. As many times this is repeated so many nights are indicated.—(3) CEASE. The clenched hands are held about as high as the neck, and five or six inches asunder, then waved two or three times laterally, to show the advances and retreats of the combatants; after which the fingers of each hand are suffered to spring from the thumb towards each other, as in the act of sprinkling water, to represent the flight of the soldiers.—(4) PRISONER. The fore-finger and thumb of the left hand are held in the form of a semicircle, opening towards the breast; and the fore-finger of the right hand, representing the prisoner, is placed upright within the curve, and passed from one side to the other, in order to show, that it will not be permitted to pass out, &c.

The epithet, *SYMBOLIC*, is sometimes applied to such combinations of gestures as these; but appears to be more generally applied to representative actions, which are either more formal and complicated, or in which the resemblance to the thing signified is less obvious, however simple the action may be in itself. So that *SYMBOLS*, though there be truly any distinction worthy of being retained, differ rather in degree than in kind; implying either greater complexity, or greater remoteness between the sign and the action, than in ordinary imitative gesture.

All travellers among our Savage tribes furnish illustrations of symbolic actions, although until recently they have not been generally aware of the existence of a system of imitative signs by mere gesture. They accordingly tell us, that friendly and peaceable sentiments are symbolically intimated, when a stranger appears among a tribe carrying or smoking a large pipe of clay or marble, adorned with feathers, which the Indians call a *CALUMNET*. The mode of confirming a treaty of peace is also symbolic.

it being done by means of what the Savages call a belt of *WAMPUM*. This belt is composed of shells of different colours, wrought into the shape of beads, which are strung upon thongs and strongly united together. The parties concerned hold the ends of the belt, and are thereby understood to signify reciprocal truth and sincerity.

§. 143. Of the symbolic exhibitions of the Hebrews.

Symbolical action is known to have been frequently employed in Oriental countries, owing in some measure to the great vivacity and suppleness of the people. Those, who are acquainted with the Bible, know how frequently it was resorted to among the ancient Hebrews. It will be sufficient merely to allude to the following instances, which may be more fully understood by a reference to the Scriptures.—Elisha directs Joash to shoot arrows out of a window eastward. Jeremiah, acting under divine direction, hides the linen girdle in the hole of a rock near Euphrates; he breaks a potter's vessel in the sight of the people; he puts on bonds and yokes, and casts a book into Euphrates. Ezekiel weighs his beard, delineates the siege of Jerusalem on a tile, &c.

It has sometimes been thought, that such symbolic actions were below the dignity of the prophetic office. In the view of the opposers of the Bible, they have appeared mean, absurd, and fanatical. But it ought to be remembered, that it was the spirit of the times, the feeling of the people themselves, which dictated those exhibitions. And to say the least, it is arrogant and unreasonable in any persons to set up the feelings and practice of their own period, to guide them in the estimation of the actions of individuals in all the ages preceding.

§. 144. Of the instinctive interpretation of certain natural signs.

The meaning of many of those signs, which are called natural, is learnt from experience. The action being a representative or imitation of the thing itself, it necessarily suggests whatever is intended to be signified. But here are some, which appear to be understood instinctive-

ly, and of course independently of experience; for instance, a smile, or frown, or the signs of terror. The opinion, that there is to a certain extent an original or instinctive interpretation of signs is maintained by writers on the following grounds.—(1) The power of interpreting such signs is noticed at a very early period, long before the ability to interpret arbitrary signs.) Children understand the meaning of smiles and frowns, of a soothing or threatening tone of voice at a time of life, when they cannot be supposed capable of so much observation as to remark the connection between a passion and its external effect. (2) Those signs, which are maintained to be susceptible of an instinctive interpretation, affect us more than others. The passions of hatred, love, and anger, interest us much more strongly, when they are represented in the countenance, than when they are expressed by mere written or spoken words. So that unquestionably we give to some natural signs a significancy, which we do not, and cannot give to others, and still less to those forms of language, which are purely arbitrary. This being the case it seems to be reasonable to conclude, that the mind has an original power of interpreting to some extent. (3) This power seems to be necessary as an introductory step to the formation of oral and alphabetical language. Artificial language, whether we regard it as written or spoken is arbitrary, and a matter of mere agreement. But if it were not of divine original, as some have contended, it is evident, that there must have been some antecedent sign by means of which such agreement was first formed.\* As we can think of no instrument, which could have been employed to this end, except the instinctive power of interpreting those signs of gesture, tones of voice, and move-

\* These considerations may be satisfactory to the minds of many persons; still there are some, who profess to doubt of the existence of this power. Among other dissenters from the more commonly received opinion, is Dr. Priestly, who has remarked on the subject SECT. XI. of his Examination of Reid. But the amount of his argument can be summed up in this brief statement, that his own children, (which might have been the case,) were in his opinion without the ability in question.

ts of the countenance, which we find from the earliest  
of life to be expressive of emotions and the passions.

§. 145. Considerations on the use of Natural signs.

before dismissing the subject of this chapter, it re-  
s to be remarked, that it is one of no little practical  
rfance, although it may often be thought otherwise.  
In attention to natural signs could hardly fail to be  
lvantage in infant schools, and in all cases of instruc-  
of very young children. The knowledge, which is  
d to their minds, is that, which we have already des-  
ed as having an external origin. Consequently, the  
cts or actions, with which they are to be made ac-  
nted, must be presented to the sight, or some other  
e senses. But in the absence of objects, the instruc-  
if he have studied the language of natural signs, will  
ble to convey the meaning of many words by gestures ;  
ethod, which will secure the purpose designed, and  
not be wanting in interest to the little pupils.

‘Notwithstanding (says Dugald Stewart) the decline  
atural language in consequence of the use of artificial  
s, the acquaintance, which we still have with the for-  
(however imperfect,) is of essential service in teach-  
children the meaning of the latter. This may be ea-  
exemplified by first reading over to a child one of  
p’s fables without taking your eye from the book, or  
g any inflection of voice ; and afterwards telling him  
same story with the commentary of your face, and  
ures, and tones.”—Again, the doctrine of natural  
s is deserving of greater attention than it has receiv-  
when it is considered in connection with the Deaf  
Dumb. No small acquaintance with them is implied  
eing able to fix upon such as are suitable in the in-  
ction of these unfortunate persons. And the worth of  
h acquaintance, therefore, can be conjectured from its  
serviency to their improvement and happiness.

Further, some knowledge of natural signs might be  
ad profitable to all travellers and sojourners among  
ions of an unknown tongue, and among others to Mis-

sionaries. One of the American missionaries in India, remarking on the acquisition of languages, observes, that, in receiving lessons from his instructor, they were often compelled to resort to signs and gestures, in order at all to understand each other. These are not unimportant considerations, and there is ground for making this remark also, that a knowledge of natural signs is subservient in some measure to the success of the fine or liberal arts, particularly sculpture, painting, and oratory.

The arts of sculpture and painting are addressed to the eye; and one great object in those arts is to express emotions. Those, therefore, who practise them, must study the connection between the illuminations of the eye, the colour and muscular movements of the face, and the general attitude which are the natural outward signs, and the internal feelings which correspond to them. It is not possible, that a single trait of character or even a single feeling should be conveyed by those admirable arts, except by means of natural signs. And hence the obvious conclusion, that no man can excel in them without a knowledge of that form of language.—Similar remarks will apply to the orator. He addresses the eye as well as the ear; and whenever he combines the language of looks, tones, and gestures with the arbitrary signs of articulate speech, he cannot fail to increase the interest of his hearers.

## CHAPTER THIRTEENTH.

### LANGUAGE. (II) ORAL SIGNS.

. 146. Remarks on the original formation of oral signs.

**M**EN are not left, in communicating their thoughts, to assistances merely, which are furnished by natural signs. Possessed of the organs of speech, they are capable of forming signs, which are addressed to the ear, and are determined by their very nature in a great degree conventional and arbitrary. Such is the difficulty of employing complicated machinery of articulation so as to form words, that it has been a doubt in the minds of some, whether men, left to themselves, would ever have acquired the power? After the power has been once attained, others may acquire it, as we daily see in the case of children, by a long and laborious process of imitating; but it undoubtedly demands some fortitude of belief to persuade ourselves, that the unaided faculties of the mind were equal to the original acquisition.

Hence it has been the opinion of the persons above alluded to, that we are indebted for the power of forming words, or of speaking, to the direct interference of the Deity himself in behalf of our first parents. This is undoubtedly a matter of opinion, but not of clear and demonstrable proof. The Bible, which is designed rather to subvert the moral and religious interests of mankind, than to satisfy antiquarian curiosity, does not set us at rest on this point. It does indeed say, that God brought the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air to Adam to see what he would call them; but it is not said, that God gave the

names himself, or that he directly aided Adam in giving them; although the supposition, that such assistance was granted, may be held to be supported by that beneficence, which is continually manifested in the dealings of the Supreme Being with his creatures.

§. 147. Oral signs or words are in general arbitrary.

In oral language, sounds stand for things, or rather the ideas of things; but there is no resemblance between the sign, and the thing signified. The fact, that articulated sounds, or words, are representative of the states of the mind, is founded on arbitrary agreement. And as this agreement necessarily involves the consent of the great mass of any people, by whom oral signs are employed, the alledged confession of the emperor Augustus was made with good reason, that he was individually unable to introduce a single new word into the Latin tongue:)

If this statement were not correct, if words had any natural fitness for that purpose, for which they are employed, and were not conventional, there would be but one language; all nations would use the same words, instead of the English employing the word, WHITE; the Latin language, ALBUS; the French, BLANC; and the German, ~~weiss~~ for the same thing, with a similar diversity in the expression of other ideas, and in other languages.

It ought to be observed, however, that there is a slight exception to this general view of the arbitrary nature of oral signs. We allude to a class of terms, of which the words, CRASH, TWANG, BUZZ, WHISTLE, SHRILL, RATTLE, may be mentioned as specimens. There is evidently some resemblance between these words, as they are enunciated by the voice, and the things, for which they stand; in other languages, some words, similar to these, that is, having like relation to the things, for which they stand, are to be found. But with this exception, which is one of a limited extent, words are truly arbitrary and conventional signs, formed in the progressive history of the human race on such occasions of want or of convenience as seemed to call for them. These occasions, on which words were first

employed, and their arrangement into classes, (what grammarians call parts of speech,) merit a brief consideration.

§. 148. Words at first few in number and limited to particular objects.

In the infancy of the human race, men were without a knowledge of the arts; they had no laws, but the dictates of conscience, no regularly instituted form of government; they lived under the open sky, except when they retreated from the storm or the sunshine to the shade of trees or the cooler recesses of caverns. Their ideas, therefore, were few; the articulate sounds, which either the active ingenuity of nature, or the special interference of Providence had taught them not only to frame, but to employ as the instituted signs of things, must have been few also; even more so, than their ideas.

The few names, which they were able thus early to employ, related (solely to the objects, with which they were immediately and particularly conversant; they had a name for the tree, under which they sat at noon; for the cavern, to which they occasionally retired; for the fruit, which relieved their hunger; and for the running water, at which they slaked their thirst. Afterwards they were led to form general names, standing for a number of objects, and probably in the following manner.

§. 149. Of the formation of general names or appellatives.

Naturally possessed of too much activity of spirit, to rest satisfied with remaining in one place, or to quiet their curiosity with a small number of objects, they engage in some new enterprise, explore new tracts of country, and thus enlarge their knowledge. In going from place to place, they necessarily meet again with those particular objects, with which they had formed such an intimate acquaintance in their first residence. They meet with other trees, with other animals, with other caves and fountains, which they at once perceive to be of the same kind with those, that have previously come under their observation.

The recurrence of these new objects instantly calls up



the others. This happens by a law of their nature, which they cannot control; and the recollection is the more intense, as, in the infancy of things, curiosity is more alive and astonishment more readily and deeply felt. The objects, with which they had become first acquainted, could not be recalled without a remembrance, at the same time, of the names, which they had given them. As they perceive the objects, which they now behold, to be the same in kind with those, which they first knew, they at once conclude, and very naturally, that they have an equal right to the names with those, to which those names were first appropriated. They, therefore, exclaim, *a tree! a cave! a fountain!* whenever and wherever they meet them. And thus what was at first a particular term, and was employed to express only an individual, has its meaning extended, and comes in time to stand for a whole class of objects.

Such, there can hardly be a question, was the origin of general names; and the statement is not only agreeable to the natural course of things, but is indirectly confirmed by many incidents. When the Spaniards first arrived at a certain region, bordering on the gulph of Mexico, and found, that the soil was rich, the dwellings good, the people numerous; they cried out, it is another Spain, and after that it bore the name of New Spain. When they first sailed along the coast of Colombia, they noticed an Indian village, built on piles, to raise it above the stagnant water, and being from that circumstance reminded of the mistress of the Adriatic, they called that region VENEZUELA (Little Venice,) which is the name of the province to this day. And it is on the same principle that people so often find themselves in this country giving names to the objects around them, in allusion to what exists on some other continent; calling a large river, another Thames, and mountains of great altitude, the American Alps. So readily does the mind connect together things which are remote, and seek for analogies between what is novel and what is familiar.

§. 150. The formation of appellatives the result of a feeling of resemblance.

We discover, in the way which has been mentioned, the origin of appellatives or common names, (in treatises of a scientific nature more commonly termed *GENERA* and *SPECIES*,) the formation of which has sometimes been considered a point of difficult solution. Taking the statement, in the last section, to be the true one, it follows, that there is, previous to the giving of the common name, a feeling or perception of resemblance, prevailing among those objects, to which the common name is applied.

If there had not been, between the perception of the objects and the giving of the common name, an intermediate feeling of resemblance, the primitive framers of language would have been as likely to have assigned the appellative to the cave and the mountain, or to any other things altogether dissimilar, as to those resembling objects, to which it was assigned.

When, therefore, those persons, who hold to the doctrine of the Nominalists, say, that all general ideas are but names, they appear to mistake ;—there is something more than the mere name, viz., that feeling of resemblance, which has been mentioned, and which, although it is difficult to explain it, except it be by referring each one to his own intellectual experience, is clearly too important a circumstance to be hastily overlooked, and thrown out of the question. (See §. 130.)

§. 151. Our earliest generalizations often incorrect.

When man first opens his eye on nature, (and in the infancy of our race, he finds himself a novice, wherever he goes,) objects so numerous, so various in kind, so novel and interesting, crowd upon his attention ; that, attempting to direct himself to all at the same time, he loses sight of their specific differences, and blends them together, more than a calm and accurate examination would justify. And hence our earliest classifications, the primitive genera and species, are often incorrectly made.

Subsequently, when knowledge has been in some

measure amassed, and reasoning and observation have been brought to a greater maturity, these errors are attended to; individuals are rejected from species, where they do not properly belong, and species from genera.

It may be of some consequence to remember this, as qualifying in some points of view the statement given in respect to the origin of generic ideas and names. Nevertheless the general statement is abundantly confirmed by consciousness, reasoning, and various facts. Among other acts alluded to, the following has been often quoted.

§. 152. Illustration of our first classifications from the Savages of Wateoo.

The English navigator, Cook, in going from New Zealand to the Friendly Islands, lighted on an Island, called Wateoo.—“The inhabitants (he says) were afraid to come near our cows and horses, nor did they form the least conception of their nature. But the sheep and goats did not surpass the limits of their ideas, for they gave us to understand, they knew them to be *birds*.”

Captain Cook informs us, that these people were acquainted with only three sorts of animals, viz. dogs, hogs, and birds.—Having never before seen any such animals as a cow or a horse, they beheld their great size and formidable aspect with admiration; filled with fear, they could not be induced to approach, and knew not what to call or to think of them. They noticed the goats and the sheep, and clearly saw, that they were different from the dogs and hogs, with which they had been acquainted. But how did it happen, that they called them birds?

There is no nation so rude and uncivilized, as not to have some few general terms, and how those general terms are formed, we have above explained. Having noticed a variety of birds in their waters and forests, the people of Wateoo had undoubtedly found it necessary before this period to assign some general name or appellative to the flying animal, expressive of those resemblances, which evidently pervade the whole class. They called them, we will suppose, BIRDS. Knowing there was a great variety of them, and that they were of different sizes, they not un-

naturally applied the same term to the sheep and goats of English. They knew not but there might be some class of birds, which they had not hitherto noticed ; they saw no insuperable objection in the size of the sheep and goats ; and their agility and power of climbing over steep and steep ascents readily reminded them of the power of flying, which they might imagine those animals had yet thought proper fully to exhibit.

But they could clearly have no thoughts of this kind respect to cows and horses ; and as to hogs and dogs had no generic term for them, having never known more than one variety or class, and having never been led to suspect, that there was any other.

If any should be disposed to make strange of this classification of these untutored Savages, a little reflection may perhaps diminish their admiration. There are classifications to be found in the present improved state of the natural sciences not more accurate than this ;—that arrangement, for example, which assigns to the same “class and name under one name the man, that walks upright and the whale that swims, the ant, that creeps, and the gnat, flies.”

#### §. 153. Of the formation of verbs.

In the exercise of their power of appointing articulate sounds as signs of thought, we now suppose men to have proceeded so far as to form general nouns or appellatives, to employ them with facility. But they soon find, there is need of another class of words, which are of great consequence both in the construction and the application of oral language, viz, VERBS.

As the ideas, expressed by verbs, concern actions rather than objects, and the attributes, affections, and relations of things rather than the things themselves, and as, therefore, be so easily defined to the understanding fixed upon by it, words of this kind were not, we may suppose, so rapidly formed as appellatives, although some of them must have been of very early origin.

Their origin may be illustrated in this way. Let it be

admitted, that the primitive inhabitants have given names to certain wild animals; Condillac supposes, that no names were given first, before those of trees, fountains, &c. It soon happens, as is very natural and reasonable to be imagined, that they see one of these animals, advance towards them with great speed and apparent ferocity. Certainly they would have an idea of the motion of the animal, as something different from the animal itself; and if they could give a name to the animal, why not to the fact of his coming towards them or running from them, the fact might be?

In the formation of the noun substantive or general term, they exclaimed, The tyger! The lion! and this exclamation became in time the common name. But when they discover a new attribute or action of the wild beast which affects them strongly and deserves a distinct appellation, and, hence, they utter some new exclamation; may be conjectured, the word, COMES, OR RUSHES; and the cry now is, tyger—rushes! lion—comes! The artificial sounds, which under such circumstances are adopted whatever they may be, are eventually fixed upon, as conventional and permanent representations of certain notions, attributes, and affections of things, and in the maturity of society and of knowledge, when man finds all that he has learnt subjected to a more exact and scientific classification, they are accordingly classed as VERBS.

§. 151. Of the formation of adjectives and other parts of speech.

It has been conjectured, that nouns and verbs were the first of origin, the earliest of all the parts of speech; and in truth, the hypothesis does not rest solely upon conjecture. It was the object of men at first to express their ideas, as they could; and they reckoned it of but little consequence, whether they did it with great precision or elegance. Adjectives, conjunctions, adverbs, prepositions, relative pronouns, were introduced by degrees, as they were found to be needed; but nouns and verbs could never be dispensed with. And in addition to this consideration, that these classes of words could not at any time

dispensed with, there is much reason to suppose from a variety of investigations, that adjectives and some other subordinate parts of speech were derived either from verbs or substantives, and of course they must have been subsequent in the period of their formation.

Agreeably to this statement, it is found, that in the dialects of some savage tribes, those qualifying words, which we call ADJECTIVES or adnouns, do not exist. "The Mohegans says an American writer) have no adjectives in all their language. Although it may at first seem not only singular and curious, but impossible that a language should exist without adjectives, yet it is an indubitable fact." This fact, strange as it may seem at first, is undoubtedly consistent with what we notice in many of the most improved languages. Thus in the English we say, a *clay* colour, a *lead* colour, a *sea* fish, a *wine* vessel, a *gold* ring. But *clay*, *lead*, *sea*, *wine*, *gold* are originally nouns, and are still used as such. We here call them adjectives, and not nouns, merely because they are employed as subordinate to other nouns, and for the purpose of qualifying them.

In other cases, adjectives can be traced back to verbs. Thus the adjective *proud* is ascertained to be the Anglo-Saxon *PRUT*, which is the past participle of *PRYTIAN*. The adjective *tall* may also be traced to the Anglo-Saxon, being the past participle of the verb *TILIAN*, *to lift up*. The epithet *right* is from the past participle of the Latin verb *regere*, *to govern*, or *order*.

#### §. 155. Of the origin of conjunctions.

The general doctrine, that nouns were first formed, afterwards verbs, and that these were the sources of other names of words, is strengthened by what we know in respect to that species of connectives, called conjunctions. The conjunction, *IF*, was originally a verb in the imperative mode, viz. *GIF*, the imperative of the Saxon word, *GEAN*, which is the same with the modern, English infinitive, *TO GIVE*. If we consider the original import of the words in this sentence, viz. *If ye love me, ye will keep my*

commandments, it will stand thus ; Give or grant this, viz. ye love me, ye will keep my commandments.

The conjunctions, **UNLESS**, **LEST**, and **ELSE**, are derivatives from the Saxon verb, **LESAN**, to dismiss. The meaning, conveyed in this sentence, viz. Unless ye believe, ye shall not understand, may be thus analyzed ;—Dismiss, ye believe, (the circumstance of belief being out of the way,) ye shall not understand.

The conjunction, **THOUGH**, was originally a verb in the imperative from the Saxon, **THAFIAN**, meaning to grant or allow. The word was originally **THAF** or **THOF**, and is thus pronounced by many of the common people in England and the United States to this day. This sentence, Though he slay me, I will trust in him, may be thus explained, in conformity with the etymological derivation ;—Allow, grant this, he will slay me, I will trust in him. )

§. 156. Further remarks on the meaning of conjunctions and other particles.

Observations, similar to those, which have been made in reference to conjunctions, will apply to other subordinate parts of speech, which, (including conjunctions,) are known under the name of particles. Accordingly it will be found on examination, that many prepositions were originally either nouns, or the participles of verbs. But this inquiry, interesting and important as it unquestionably is, cannot be further prosecuted here. It is proper, however, to guard the foregoing views by saying, that when a language is fully formed and settled upon, we would not advise a confident and indiscriminate reference to the etymology of particles, in order to determine their present significancy ; although in many cases, as in those mentioned in the preceding section, such a reference throws light upon them. Whatever particles may have been at first, whether nouns or verbs, or whatever direct and positive significancy they may have once had, they are at last, when the language is fully formed, evidently without meaning, except so far as they are connected with other words.

The proper use of them seems to be, to express the

states of our mind, as we pass from one clause of a sentence to another, or from one proposition to another; also the restriction, distinction, and opposition of our thoughts. Admitting, then, that, in some instances, we can derive considerable aid from etymology, the surest method of ascertaining the meaning of this class of words, is by observing the operations of our own minds, as we connect together our ideas in clauses, sentences, and consecutive propositions.

§. 157. Of the origin of particular or proper names.

Although general names or appellatives, as appeared in §. 148, were first applied to particular objects, as soon as they became general and were employed to denote classes of objects, they were no longer of use in the specification of individuals. Their utility in that respect necessarily ceased. Hence arose the class of substances or nouns, called particular or proper names, designed especially to indicate individual objects. In ascertaining to what objects terms of this kind shall be assigned, it can only be said, that we give proper names to such things, as we have frequent and urgent occasion to mention; no other rule can readily be laid down.—We, accordingly, give particular names to rivers, lakes, cataracts, mountains, because we have frequent occasion to speak of them individually, of the Mississippi, the La Plata, the Alps, and the Appenines. There is still greater reason, why we should give names of this sort to our fellow beings, with whom we constantly associate, and on whom our happiness is in no small degree dependent. But the assignment of proper names is far from being limited to men, or to rivers, or to mountains, or to cataracts. We continually meet with them.—The merchant gives names to his vessels, the farmer to his oxen, the hunter to his dogs, and the jockey to his horses, on the same principles and for the same reason, that one river is called Ganges and another Danube, and that one man is called John, and another William.



## §. 158. Principle of selection and significancy of proper names.

But a question arises, On what principle are the names themselves selected? Proper names undoubtedly were at first expressive of some qualities or events, pertaining to the individuals or objects, to which they were applied. Thus in the Hebrew, probably the most ancient of languages, the name BENJAMIN signifies a favourite or prosperous son; JOSHUA intimates help or deliverance; SAMUEL implies a disposition to hear or obey God. In the Gaelic language, CAIRBAR (the strong man,) MOENA (the well beloved,) CATHMOR (great in battle,) CLUTHA or Clyde (the bending river,) might be referred to, as illustrating and confirming this view. In the more refined Latin, the famous name of BRUTUS alludes to the fact, that Lucius Junius acted the assumed part of a brutish or foolish person, in order to conceal his patriotic designs. And the hardly less renowned name of CORIOLANUS was first given in reference to the assault of Corioli by a Roman soldier. Multitudes of proofs of the same thing, that proper names were originally descriptive, occur in the languages and history of Savage tribes. Accordingly among many other similar instances, the words MISSISSIPPI and NIAGARA, which have no meaning for an Anglo-American, are significant in the Indian tongues; the former signifying the great river, and the latter, the thunder of waters.

## CHAPTER FOURTEENTH.

### LANGUAGE. (III) WRITTEN SIGNS.

§ 159. Of the causes which led to the formation of written signs.

**T**HE formation of oral language preceded that of **WRITTEN**, or those artificial signs, which are addressed to the eye instead of the ear. But with all the advantage of oral language, men could not long be insensible to the great convenience of a mode of communication, which did not require personal presence. Previous to resorting to written signs, the transmission of commands from one place to another required the agency of persons specially commissioned for that purpose. All history likewise was, at that period, necessarily embodied in traditions. The father, who had himself participated in great national events, told them to the son; and the son repeated them in the ears of the succeeding generation. It was thus, that the poems of Ossian are said to have been handed down. It was thus according to Tacitus, (*DE MORIBUS GERMANORUM*, §. 2, 3.,) that the legends and heroic songs of the ancient tribes of Germany were transmitted. And it was from traditions, repeated through succeeding ages, that Garcilasso composed the history of the Incas of Peru.

But various mistakes were found to arise from traditionary communications, and in all cases of messages between persons at a distance from each other. Being, therefore, put upon seeking some other artificial method of making their thoughts known, men at last invented the different forms of written language.

- §. 160. The first artificial signs, addressed to the eye, were pictures.

Although they did not find oral language suited to all their purposes, it seems to have been beyond their power, immediately to invent alphabets. They at first made visible sketches of actions and events precisely as they exist.

The expression of ideas in this method has been more or less practised in all nations during the early periods of their history, and has been of considerable aid to them in making out the record of their early annals. We are informed in the Pentateuch, that figures were embroidered in the curtains of the HOLY OF HOLIES; and learn from the ancient poems of Homer, that Helen wrought in embroidery the pictures of the battles, in which the attractions of her own person had caused the Greeks and Trojans to be engaged.—The expression of ideas by painting in colours, or by pictorial writing in other ways, is found to exist among the Savages of North America. Bows and arrows, hatchets, animals of various kinds are imprinted on the bodies of their chiefs, the indications of their calling and of their heroic qualities.

A recent and somewhat striking illustration of this topic cannot well be omitted. It is found in the Journal of an expedition, that was sent out in 1820, to explore the north-western region of the United States. A part of the company, in passing across from the river St. Louis to Sandy Lake, had missed their way together with their Indian attendants, and could not tell, where they were. In consequence of being in this situation, the Indians, not knowing what might be the result, determined to leave at a certain place, a memorial of their journey for the information of such of their tribe, as might happen to come in that direction afterwards. In the party there was a military officer, a person whom the Indians understood to be an attorney, and a mineralogist; eight were armed; when they halted, they formed three encampments. The Savages went to work and traced out with their knives upon a piece of birch bark a man with a sword for the officer, another human figure with a book in his hand for the law-

yer, and a third with a hammer for the mineralogist ; three ascending columns of smoke denoted the three encampments, and eight muskets, the number of armed men, &c.\*

We find pictorial delineations to have been practised, in particular, among the original inhabitants of Mexico. It is related by historians, that when the Spaniards first landed upon that coast, the natives despatched messengers to the king, Montezuma, with a representation, painted on cloth, of the landing and appearance of the Europeans. The events and appearances, which they wished to describe, were new to them, and these pictured representations were the methods, which they adopted, in preference to any other, to express those ideas which they deemed it important the king should immediately possess.

Pictures, as well as gestures, are a very imperfect mode of communicating ideas, as they must, from their very nature, be limited, in a great degree, to the description of external events. They fail in disclosing the connections of those events, in developing dispositions, intricate trains of thoughts, and, in some measure, the passions. Attempts were, therefore, soon made to introduce another form of writing called hieroglyphics.

#### §. 161. Of hieroglyphical writing.

**HIEROGLYPHICS**, (from the Greek words, **HIEROS**, sacred, and **GULPHO**, to carve,) are figures, sometimes painted, or embroidered, and at others, carved out ; used to express ideas. They differ from pictorial writing, chiefly, in being an abridgment of it, and also in this particular, that they select, by the aid of analogies more or less remote, figures for the purpose of expressing the less obvious mental emotions and abstract truths.

Hieroglyphics were employed much more among the Egyptians than elsewhere, and the whole art probably arose in this way. The method of communicating thoughts by means of paintings, as among the Mexicans, and which, undoubtedly, existed among the Egyptians, previous to

\* Schoolcraft's Narrative Journal, Chap. viii.

the invention of hieroglyphics, was found inconvenient. The work was difficult in the execution, and bulky when it was completed; and there was, accordingly, very soon an attempt at the abridgment of that method. Hence the head was used to designate a man; two or more hands with weapons opposed, a battle; a scaling ladder, set against a wall, a siege; a leafless tree, the winter. Thus the first step towards the formation of a hieroglyphical system was taken. But when those, who depended upon this mode of expressing their thoughts, came to certain classes of the passions, the moral qualities, and a variety of abstract truths, they were under the necessity of finding out certain sensible objects, which bore or were supposed to bear some resemblance to such ideas, and consequently, to go further in such instances, than a mere abridgment of pictorial delineations.—The eye was selected, in reference to such analogies, to signify wisdom; ingratitude was expressed by a viper, biting the hand, that gave it food; courage, by a lion; imprudence, by a fly; cunning, by a serpent.—As the number of ideas among the people increased, and became more and more abstract, greater ingenuity was required in the invention of hieroglyphical characters to express them. Thus; a winged globe, with a serpent issuing from it, came to denote the universe, or universal nature.

§. 162. Of the written characters of the Chinese.

The third step in the progress of the human mind towards the invention of an alphabetical character, was the framing of such arbitrary signs, as are employed by the Chinese at the present day,

It is a peculiarity of the written language of the Chinese, that it employs artificial and arbitrary delineation. Thus, for the idea, expressed by the English word, *runner*, we have this delineation, which is less complicated than many others, viz. a figure, approaching in its form to a square with another figure nearly in the shape of an equilateral triangle, placed in the centre of it. The character, which, as it is articulated, is *run*, and answers to the *E*

lish word EAR, is somewhat in the shape of a PARALLELOGRAM, crossed at nearly equal distances from the ends by lines, drawn at right angles to the sides.

- §. 163. The Chinese character an improvement on the hieroglyphical.

As hieroglyphics are an improvement on the mode of expressing ideas by painting, the characters employed by the Chinese may with good reason be considered the next step in advance of hieroglyphics. It is a proof of this, that many of the characters, particularly those called elementary, bore originally an analogy or resemblance to the objects, for which they stand. They were of course anciently hieroglyphics, although now arbitrary characters. The fact, on which this conclusion is founded, is ascertained by consulting ancient inscriptions on cups of serpentine stone, on vases of porcelain, on seals of agate, and the characters used in editions of very ancient books. The characters, which at present stand for the sun, moon, a field, and the mouth, are quite arbitrary, and we discover no analogy between them and the object; but it was otherwise at first.—The sun was originally represented by a circle with a dot in the centre; the moon, by the segment of a circle; a field, by a figure resembling a square, set off into smaller divisions by two lines intersecting each other at right angles in the centre; a mouth, by a figure, intended to represent the projection of the lips.\*

\*The progress of the system of the Chinese from a hieroglyphic to a purely arbitrary character may be illustrated by the following story.

A tavern-keeper in Hungary, unable to write, kept account of the sum due to him by strokes chalked on his door; to each series of strokes was annexed a figure to denote the customer, to whom they related. The soldier was represented by the figure of a musket, a carpenter by a saw, the smith by a hammer. In a short time for convenience, the musket was reduced to a straight line, the saw to a zig-zag line, the hammer to a cross; and thus began to be formed a set of characters, gradually receding from the original figure. The resemblance might at last be entirely lost sight of, and the figures become mere arbitrary marks.

## §. 164. Artificial delineations employed as signs of sound.

But it is to be recollected, that the artificial delineations, towards the formation of which the human mind has thus gradually advanced, were used to denote ideas merely, and not *sounds* or words as they are enunciated. The two systems of oral and written signs are supposed as yet to have been entirely independent of each other. It could not be long, however, before they would assume new relations, and written characters would gradually be employed as significant of sounds, as well as of thought.—The idea, which we express by the word PRISONER, had its correspondent delineation, its appropriate arbitrary figure; it also had its appropriate oral sign or sound. The oral sign would by association call up both the thing itself and the written delineation. And on the other hand, the written character would naturally suggest both the idea and the oral sign. It was in this way, arbitrary written characters gradually gave up their original office, and came to stand as directly representative of sounds, and indirectly of ideas. This was coming back to the original intention of nature, which seems to have framed the power of the human voice with the design of making them the predominant instrument of intellectual communication; whatever aid might be derived to them from other sources.

## §. 165. Formation of syllabic alphabets.

But it was desirable, that every possible benefit should be derived from this new application of arbitrary written marks, as signs of words. The next step, therefore, was to fix upon such sounds as are elementary, and also upon certain characters to represent them. But to ascertain what sounds are elements and their exact number, was exceedingly difficult; and it is highly improbable, that it was done at once.—The improvers of language, however, not only succeeded in detecting monosyllables, but also in resolving compound words into their monosyllabic parts. The first alphabets, therefore, as is generally supposed, were syllabic; that is, were single syllables, consisting of a consonant sound, combined with a vowel sound.

The base of these syllables being single consonants, variously modified by vowels, the distinction was at some subsequent period made between consonant and vowel sounds; characters and names were appropriated to each; and alphabets consequently assumed a new form.—Such, after many laborious investigations, seems to be the general sentiment as to the progress of human invention through the successive forms of pictures, hieroglyphics, the arbitrary delineations of the Chinese, and syllabic alphabets or alphabets of letters. Abundant proofs are extant, that these various methods of artificial writing have been employed at different periods; and such is their mutual relation it is not difficult to conceive of the progress of the human mind from one to the other.\*

Examine Warburton's *Divine Legation*, Vol. II.; Condillac's *Origin of Knowledge*, Pt. II. Sect. I. ch. 4, 3.; Reid's *Inquiry*, Ch. IV. § 2. V. §. 3.; De Stutt Traut's *Ideology*, (*Ideologie*,) Pt. II.; Tooke's *Diversions of Purley*; Adam Smith's *Considerations on the Formation of Languages*; Stewart, Vol. III.; Edward's *Observations on the Muhhekaneew (Mohegan) Indians*; and other Essays of American authors on the languages of the Aborigines.

\*Two recent facts throw light upon, and confirm the views of this chapter. (1.) The discovery, that there existed among the ancient Egyptians an alphabet, representative of simple sounds. The characters, standing for the sounds, are hieroglyphics or symbolical images of objects. On examination, it appears, that the hieroglyphics are taken from objects, the oral signs or names of which begin with the same sounds or articulations, which they are themselves destined to represent. Thus, the image of an eagle, which in the Egyptian language is called *Acuon*, became the sign of the vowel *A*. Once it is probable, they began in the examination of this subject with names. It was by the analysis of these names, that ultimately the resolution of the human voice into its syllabic and primary elements was made. And in giving signs to sounds, they selected those hieroglyphics of objects, the names of which had particularly assisted them in their analysis.—(2.) The other fact referred to, is a recent invention of an alphabet of the Cherokee language by a member of that tribe, who appears to have received no instruction from others on the analysis of the human voice. The name of this ingenious man, who has done what some people have supposed beyond the powers of the human mind under the most favourable circumstances, is *Gusst*. His alphabet is syllabic; the number of characters is eighty six, representing all the principal sounds in the Cherokee language. Each character stands for a single or double consonant sound, combined with a simple vowel sound.



## CHAPTER FIFTEENTH.

### RIGHT USE OF WORDS.

#### §. 168. Imperfections of artificial language or words.

**W**E now find men furnished, in addition to the language of natural signs, with oral and alphabetical language, and possessed of the great advantages which may be supposed to flow from this powerful instrument of mental action and communication. It may be said without exaggeration not only to express ideas, but to multiply them. At least, the facility of expressing and communicating thought by means of it sets men upon renewed thinking, and the result is wider views; more correct principles; moral, civil, and scientific improvement. And notwithstanding, it cannot be denied, that language, (we here reference in this chapter particularly to artificial language or words, which is a term standing both for oral and written signs,) is not without its imperfections. It may be said in general, to be imperfect, or to fail of its object whenever the same ideas are not excited in the mind of the hearer or reader, as in that of the speaker or writer. Nor can we reasonably expect, when we look at the cause or foundation of this imperfection, that it will ever be otherwise; since that cause will be found to exist naturally in the condition of the mind and in our ideas, rather than in the words, which stand for them. This requires a brief illustration.

It often happens, that men view the same object in different lights; whether it be owing to su

difference in early education, or to local prejudices, or to some other cause, the fact itself is well known, and may well be considered, as frequently unavoidable. Hence different persons very often attach the same name to certain objects and actions, when their views of those actions and objects are not the same. One has a greater number, than another, of simple ideas, entering into his complex notions, and perhaps, in the formation of the compound, they respectively give to those simple ideas a different relation to each other. The consequence, therefore, is, that, in such cases, as have now been mentioned, the names or words, which are used, necessarily fail of exciting in the earer the same ideas, that exist in the mind of the speaker.

Many of the disputes, which have existed in the world, and the history of philosophical opinions shows, how numerous they have been,) have been caused by a misunderstanding of this sort; different persons using the same terms, when their ideas are not the same. In support of this remark, it will be enough merely to refer to the often repeated discussions upon virtue, conscience, faith, free will, obligation, religion, &c.—But language, in so far as it is imperfect, fails of the great object, for which it was invented and agreed upon, and it, therefore, becomes important to diminish the amount of this failure and to guard against it, as far as possible.—To this end, the following rules on the right use of words may be laid down.

§. 167. Words are not to be used without meaning.

**ROLE FIRST.**—In the employment of language, the first rule to be laid down, is this, that we should never use a word without some meaning. It may be thought extraordinary, that any should use words in this way, but a little examination cannot fail to convince one of the fact. Let any one inquire of those persons, who are in the habit of employing such words, as instinct, sympathy, antipathy, &c. a variety of others, which might be mentioned, and it will speedily appear, that while some are greatly at a loss to assign any sort of meaning to them, others are utterly unable to do it. They are applied, as one may say, by

rote ; they have been learnt from hearing others use them, and are repeated, because they have been learnt, without their significancy having ever been inquired into.

There are not only words used in this way, but whole phrases, of which the Peripatetic philosophy readily affords many instances. What can be said of "vegetative souls," "intentional species," "substantial forms," "abhorrence of a vacuum," and the like, but that they are combinations of terms without meaning ; and while they have the appearance of science, are no better, than an intended imposition on the understanding ?

This error is much more frequent, than has generally been supposed ;—many words go down from one to another by a sort of hereditary descent, and are passively received and adopted, like a thousand opinions and prejudices, which exist again, merely because they have existed before. We are exceedingly apt to adopt words from our parents and instructors, and to repeat the peculiar phraseology of our favourite sect or party, and either out of our great reverence for them, or from the circumstance of our being too indolent to make careful inquiries, we rest satisfied in a shameful ignorance of every thing but a mere sound. Hence, if it be considered desirable, that language should retain its value, which chiefly consists in recording and communicating thought, the rule laid down should be strictly observed,—not to employ words without meaning.

§. 168 Words should stand for distinct and determinate ideas.

SECOND RULE ;—It is not enough, that we use words with meaning, or have ideas for them, but a second rule is, that the meaning or the ideas be distinct and determinate.

We apply the epithet, **DISTINCT**, to simple ideas, meaning by the expression, that they should carefully be kept separate from, and not confounded with other simple ideas. The epithet, **DETERMINATE**, may more properly be applied to the class of our ideas called complex. As complex ideas are made up of simple ones, when we say, that they should be determinate, the meaning is, that a precise col-

of simple ideas should be fixed upon in the mind ; should not remain a matter of uncertainty what simples are included, and what are not. We at once see the use of this rule. If our simple ideas are confounded, mixed together, or if we know not accurately the elements of our complex states of mind, these circumstances necessarily diminish very much from the value of the words, and are a disadvantage for them. With this explanation, the rule cannot be better understood, viz.—That our words should have a clear and determinate meaning ; or what is the same thing, that the ideas should be distinct and determinate, so that the words express.

The application of this rule seems to be particularly important in regard to terms, standing for mixed modes ; especially such names of mixed modes, as are of a moral kind. One reason of this is, that these terms have no objects in nature, no archetypes, to which they can be referred, which are external to, and independent of the self. They have been rightly regarded, as a species of mental creations. The materials or simple ideas which compose them, are in a certain sense independent of the mind, but the arrangement of them is not ; and they, therefore, have an existence by the mere choice and act of the mind, and are properly intellectual formations.

The word JUSTICE comes within the class of ideas, called mixed modes, and, being a moral term, is of frequent use ; but, although every person may be supposed to have some meaning to it, that meaning is not always the same, and, in consequence, the term often causes ambiguity. We will imagine the proper definition of it to be—The assigning to any one reward or punishment according to LAW. It will readily occur, that the complex idea will be involved in obscurity and uncertainty without a clear understanding of the subordinate idea, expressed by the word, LAW ; that the compound or the whole will not be fully known, without a knowledge of the number and the character of the parts ;—and the same of other mixed modes.

In respect to the names of substances it should be ob-

served, that the ideas, which the names represent, should be not only distinct and determinate, but such, as will accurately correspond to the things themselves.

It will, undoubtedly, be considered troublesome, to be under the necessity of complying with the directions here laid down, and to take so much care in settling in our minds the precise import of our complex notions. But it is a labour, which cannot well be dispensed with. Until it be undergone, men will often be perplexed as to their own meaning, and disputes, which might by a different course be speedily terminated, will be prolonged and multiplied without end.

§. 169. The same word not to be used at the same time in different senses.

THIRD RULE ;—We are not to use the same word in the same discourse with different meanings ; with this exception, that, if we should find it in some degree necessary slightly to vary the signification, which may sometimes be the case, notice should be given of it. But it is at once remarked, in connection with this rule, that words in all languages have a variety of significations, and that it cannot well be otherwise, unless we are willing to multiply them to an inordinate and burdensome degree. This is true ;—but it may justly be replied, that no well constituted language admits varieties of meaning, which the train of the discourse, the natural connection of thought fails to suggest. When, therefore, a person uses an important word in an argument with another, or in any separate discourse, whether the signification be the common one or not, it is rightly expected, that he employ it in the same sense afterwards, in which he was understood to use it when he began. If he do not, there will be unavoidable misunderstanding ; the most laborious discourses will be of giving instruction, and controversies under such circumstances cannot be terminated. This making the same word stand for different ideas, is spoken of by Mr. Locke as a species of cheating ; it being much the same, as a person in settling his accounts, should employ the number THREE, sometimes for three ; at others, for four, &c.

, which could not be attributed to any thing else, great ignorance, or great want of honesty.

Of the meaning of words as used by different persons.

are led to remark, in the further consideration of the use of words, that different individuals often attach different meanings to the same term in cases, where we imagine they employ them alike.—As an illustration, we will suppose a piece of gold to be presented to a child, and, undoubtedly, the prominent idea, which occurs to it is, that it is something of a bright, beautiful object. Another person, more advanced in years, adds to this a notion of weight to his complex notion of it; another, more better acquainted with its true nature, adds to this solidity, fusibility, and any other qualities, which he has previously been enabled to discover.—It may be true, that differences of this kind in the meaning of words are to some extent unavoidable, but the mere fact, that they exist in any case, and may possibly exist in very many, is of great importance, that some principle be proposed, which shall tend to limit the number of them. Without such a principle it is difficult to give a rule, applicable to all differences of this nature; but an observation of the following facts will fail to check in some measure the evils, which we here view.

171. Words are to be employed agreeably to good and reputable use.

THE FOURTH RULE is, that we are to employ names in such a manner as good and reputable use has affixed to

One great object of language, that of communicating our ideas to others, would fail without an observance of this rule. Since whatever principles may be laid down in regard to good and reputable use, it involves and implies at least that use, which generally prevails. He, who employs words different from the prevalent ones, cannot well expect to be understood.—In order with the greater precision to determine what good and reputable use is, the three following rules may be

## §. 172. What constitutes good and reputable use.

(1) It is one circumstance in favour of the good reputable usage of a word, which constitutes what is otherwise termed common use, that it is found in the writing of a considerable number, if not the majority of good authors. It is not, in ordinary cases, sufficient to authorize a word, that it is found in one merely, or even in a few writers, and those, who are supported by such limited authority, cannot count on being generally understood.

(2) A second direction is, that the words, which claim to good and reputable use, should not be provincial or limited to a particular district of country ;—Furt those words, which are recently introduced from a foreign tongue, either by merchants in the intercourse of business or by travellers for other reasons or in other ways, which are not naturalized, and are not known to be necessary, have not this character. Good and reputable words are such, as are in use among the great mass of the people in all parts of the territories of a country, however extensive, where any language is professed to be spoken. This is what is termed national use, in distinction from that jargon, which often springs up in neighbourhoods which, in the ways, to which we have already alluded, at times introduced from a foreign source.

(3) There is implied, thirdly, in the common and reputable use of a language, that use, which prevails at present time. If we would employ words with their customary signification, with that meaning, which is ordinarily attached to them, we must adopt the use of the people, in which we live. It is not, however, necessarily implied in this rule, that we must limit ourselves to the present year or even the present age. Certain limits are true, must be fixed upon, which include our own time but they may be of greater or less extent, although it is a matter of no small difficulty judiciously to ascertain and define them.

§. 173. The nature of the subject is to be considered.

Another and FIFTH RULE is, that, in the use of words, their meaning is to be modified by the nature of the subjects, to which they relate.—The great body of our knowledge concerns two distinct classes of existences, material and spiritual. But language, (we speak of artificial language or words,) is not susceptible of a correspondent division; it has but one origin, viz., from material objects. Hence we necessarily have strong associations with words before we apply them to the intellect; these associations are not always broken up by the subsequent application. It is such associations Bacon has in view, when he says; “Men believe, that reason governs their words, but it often happens, that words have power enough to react upon reason.” This reaction of the mind can be nothing other than a biasing of the judgment through an inattention to the appropriate nature of the subject, about which language is employed.

The errors, which will result from neglecting the rule above, may be briefly illustrated by a reference to the words in our own language, which have relation to mental operations.—Thus we frequently speak of the mind as a RECEPTACLE of thought or ideas. By repeatedly employing the term in this way, people are induced to think of the mind as a material something, which is scooped out, and which is capable of treasuring up its acquisitions in the literal sense of the words. Again, we often speak of a CHAIN of ideas. This language implies a notion, which is closely connected with that of a receptacle or repository. Our thoughts are presented in such expressions, as coiled up in the receptacle, ready to be drawn out or taken in as occasion may require. In the following passage of Mr. Locke concerning memory, he seems to consider it a sort of soft waxen tablet. “The memory in some men, it is true, is very tenacious, even to a miracle; but yet there seems to be a constant decay of all our ideas, even of those, which are the DEEPEST, and in minds the most RETENTIVE; so that, if they be not sometimes renewed by repeated exer-



cise of the senses, or reflection on those kinds of objects, which at first occasioned them, the **PRINT WEARS OUT**, and at last there remains nothing to be seen."—The words, reflect, comprehend, imagine, impress, &c. when applied to the mind, furnish other illustrations to the same purpose. They were first applied to material objects, and were originally expressive of such objects and their qualities merely. And hence in their application to the mind, we are exceedingly apt to transfer the material part of their signification, and to predicate it of something, which has nothing in common with matter. Through the agency of such words, applied in the first place to material things and afterwards to intellectual, many persons are led into serious and permanent mistakes.—These mistakes may in a good measure be avoided by an adherence to the rule given, and probably in no other way, viz, by modifying the meaning of terms by the nature of the subject, to which they relate.

§. 174. We have not words for all our ideas.

Words are employed as signs, standing for ideas; but it must not be imagined, and certainly it is not true, that all ideas have words, corresponding to them. This assertion holds in regard to both simple and complex ideas. Among our simple ideas are colours; we call one colour **RED**; another, **WHITE**; but it is certainly not too much to say, there are many diversities or grades in those colours, which we have a notion of or perceive, but have never given them specific names. The same may be said of the diversities in our sensations of hearing, touch, and taste.

There are various complex ideas, which a person has, or may have, and yet without names, answering to them. In translating from one language into another, the truth here stated is clearly perceived; in reading the German language, for example, which has a large number of very expressive compounds, we often meet with words, which suggest to the mind very clear ideas, but find no single words in English precisely corresponding. And it is some-

times with difficulty, that we can express them even by a number or combination of words. But, in general, we find in every well-formed language words, sufficient for the expression of those ideas, which are most distinctly formed, and which, in the intercourse of life, we have most frequent occasion to communicate.

§. 175. Of the definition of words.

The schoolmen defined terms *PER GENUS ET DIFFERENTIAM*, that is, by a term more general, than the word to be defined, with an additional word or words, expressive of some specific or distinguishing quality. Thus, man was defined by them *ANIMAL RATIONALE*, an animal endued with reason; *ANIMAL* being the term, wider in signification or more generic than man, and *RATIONALE* the epithet, indicative of the difference between man and other animals. A serious objection might be readily raised to this definition. If the schoolmen meant by the epithet *RATIONALE* what has been termed the discursive faculty or that operation, by which we compare together propositions and deduce conclusions from premises, it might be questioned, whether dogs, horses, and elephants are not men, since it is the opinion of very many that they possess this ability in some small degree.

A better mode of definition is by enumerating and explaining some essential elements, entering into the nature and composition of the thing to be defined; and this analysis of the elementary parts may be more or less particular, as circumstances require.—It should be remarked here, that we now speak of the definition of words, standing for complex ideas; since, as already observed in §. 69, words standing for simple ideas do not admit of definition. No one can make the simple ideas of red, white, blue, sweet, bitter, &c. more clear than they are at present by definitions whatever, which can be given.

Although it be difficult, or rather impossible to define simple ideas, to make them any clearer than they already are, what are called complex ideas, admit of a definition.

Complex ideas consist of various simple ideas combined together ; the words, standing for them, cannot, indeed, of themselves, suggest the simple ideas, and show us what they are, independently of the aid of the senses ; but they may clearly and readily indicate to us, how these ideas are to be arranged and combined together in order to form complex ones. The word, *rainbow*, expresses a complex idea. Accurately define it by an enumeration of the colours, entering into its composition, and by a statement of its appearance to a person, who has the faculty of sight, and he will understand or have a conception of it, although he may never have seen one ; and this happens, because he has the simple ideas, and the words or description shows him, how they are combined together. But it is impossible to impart such a conception to a person, who has always been blind, because he has never had the simple ideas of colours ; and words merely can never convey to him that knowledge.

§. 176. Of an universal language.

The inquiry has sometimes been started, Whether there might not be a conventional, (that is an oral and written,) language, which should be permanent, and be employed by all nations ;—in other words, Whether there might not be an universal language ? The impracticability of such an universal tongue appears both from the nature and the history of this mode of expressing thought.

(1) The nature of language shows its impracticability.

It is an idea, which observation seems to have well established, that whatever is imperfect has a tendency to work out its own ruin ; and language, however excellent an invention, can never be otherwise than imperfect, since the human mind, which forms it, is itself limited, and often running into error. It will illustrate this remark when we are reminded, that the external, material world is one of the great sources of our ideas, but our mental powers being imperfect, different persons form different ideas of the same objects. They then agree in giving the same

comes to these ideas or combinations of ideas, and therefore often arises in this way a mutual misapprehension of that very agreement, which is not only the origin, but the support of language. The seeds of the mutability and destruction of language are, therefore, sown in its very birth, and once a very little reflection cannot fail to show how many perplexities, how many discussions, how many changes may arise from this single circumstance, that, in consequence of the imperfection of our faculties, men often agree to consider words, as standing for what they imagine to be the same ideas, but which are not. We cannot, then, reasonably expect an universal and permanent language, until our minds can fully penetrate into the true nature of things, until our ideas are perfect, and different individuals can certainly and exactly inform themselves of the thoughts, existing in the minds of others.

Further ;—the political institutions of one country, the peculiarities in the aspects of its natural scenery, early associations, occupations, and habits, lay the foundation for a variety of thoughts and shades of thought, which, in other countries, will not exist, because the causes of their existence are not to be found. If thoughts, feelings, imaginations exist under these circumstances, words will be needed to express them, for which there will be no occasion in another country and among another people ;—so that we find here also a permanent and extensive cause of the diversities of languages.

(2) The impracticability of an universal language is seen also from the history of languages in times past.

We cannot conceive of an universal language without supposing it to be permanent, for if there are any causes, which would operate to affect its permanency, the operation of the same causes would be felt in checking and preventing its universality. But if we search the whole history of man, in order to find a language, that has remained permanent, unaltered ; it will be an entirely fruitless pursuit. Not one such can be found.

There appears to have been originally in Asia Minor a language, spoken to a great extent, which after a time

disappeared, so that the very name was lost. So far being able to maintain itself and increase the territory where it was spoken, it was at last broken up into a variety of subordinate idioms, certainly no less than seven, to wit, the Syriac, the Chaldaic, the Arabic, the Ethiopian, the Phœnician, and Samaritan.\*

A common language seems also to have been the original foundation of the different dialects of Greece.

No reason can be given in explanation of the permanency in these ancient languages, which would lead us to expect constant changes in any other tongue and under any other circumstances. If all the nations on the earth could, by the providence of the Supreme Being, be made to-morrow acquainted with one universal language, a knowledge of the nature of language and of its history would warrant us in predicting the speedy discontinuance of this universality, and the division of the language world into the dialects of islands, continents, and several territories. So that the remark of De Stult-Tradition, 'an universal language is as much an impossibility as perpetual motion,' is not without reason.

§. 177. Remarks of Condillac on the changes, and corruption of language.

It is a remark of Condillac, to whose treatise *Origin of Knowledge*, we have already had occasion to refer, that it is nearly the same in language, as in philosophy, where motion, the source of life, becomes the principle of destruction. "When a language abounds (says he) in original writers in every kind, the more a person is enriched with abilities, the more difficult he thinks it will be

\* In a former section, the Hebrew was spoken of as probably the oldest language. It might be thought more exact to represent it as a dialect of the oldest language. But this qualification of the remark is not absolutely essential, when we take into account the common opinion, that the Hebrew approaches nearer to the original language, than the other dialects. Although time has engraven on it certain peculiarities, which go to constitute it a dialect, it substantially retains the features of the primitive tongue.

pass them. A mere equality would not satisfy his ambition; like them he wants the pre-eminence. He, therefore, tries a new road. But as every style analogous to the character of the language, and to his own, hath been already used by preceding writers, he has nothing left but to deviate from analogy. Thus in order to be an original, he is obliged to contribute to the ruin of a language, which a century sooner he would have helped to improve.

Though such writers may be criticised, their superior abilities must still command success. The ease there in copying their defects, soon persuades men of indifferent capacities, that they shall acquire the same degree of reputation. Then begins the reign of subtile and strained conceits, of affected antitheses, of specious paradoxes, ofivolous and far-fetched expressions, of new fangled words, and in short of the jargon of persons, whose understandings have been debauched by bad metaphysics. The public applauds; foolish and ridiculous writings, the beings of a day, are surprisingly multiplied; a vicious taste infects the arts and sciences, which is followed by a visible decrease of men of abilities."—See Locke's Essay, Bk. II., Condillac's Origin and Progress of Knowledge, Pt. I., Stewart's Elements, Chapter on Language, SECT. III., De Stutt Tracy, Pt. II. CHAP. VI., Campbell's Rhetoric, &c.

## CHAPTER SIXTEENTH.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF LANGUAGES.

#### §. 178. General remarks on peculiarities of style.

**T**HE style of a writer is his choice of words and manner of arranging them. Every writer of genius employs a style in some degree peculiar to himself. The nature of language leads us to expect this. Language is the expression of thought, and all writers of real worth think and feel in some degree for themselves; their style, therefore, which embodies and sets forth their mental states to others, will have a form and impress of its own. The languages of nations also have a style or peculiarity of manner,—certain prevailing characteristics, which readily distinguish them from those of other nations.

The style of individual writers, the characteristics of the style of Savages in their brief records and speeches, and those also of the languages of civilized and literate communities are all subjects of philosophical inquiry, and never can be fully understood and explained without referring to some principles of the human mind.

#### §. 179. Characteristics of style in uncivilized nations.

As uncivilized tribes are ignorant of alphabetical language, they are unable to furnish us with many specimens of mental effort;—rarely any thing more than some brief historical sketches, war songs, and speeches. The words which such tribes employ, are generally few in number compared with the vocabulary of civilized nations; and

this number only a small proportion are the signs of abstract ideas. Having but few abstract ideas, and, consequently, but few names for them, they are under a necessity of resorting constantly to figurative illustrations; so that their language seems to partake of the materiality of the external objects, with which they are chiefly conversant. But aided, as they are, by metaphorical expressions, their stock of words still remains small; and the sentences, which they utter, must, therefore, of necessity be short. These short and figurative sentences are inspirited with all the untamed passions of a savage mind.

"The bones of our countrymen (say the Chiefs) lie uncovered; their bloody bed has not been washed clean; their spirits cry against us; they must be appeased; sit no longer inactive upon your mats; lift the hatchets; console the spirits of the dead."

§. 180. Origin of apologues and of the parabolic style.

Nations, while in an uncivilized state, or when at best they are only in their progress toward intellectual refinement, do not often attempt abstract reasonings or abstract speculations of any kind;—and this is one marked characteristic of the style of such periods. The causes are chiefly two.

One of which is, that they have a small number of general terms; and it could not be expected to be otherwise. It is no doubt true, that we are capable of carrying on trains of reasoning to some little extent without the aid of general terms or those words, which stand for general abstract ideas; but it is no less evident, that they are of great use, and that without them all processes of reasoning must be very much circumscribed.

This circumstance also deserves consideration, as accounting in some measure for the absence of abstract speculations and reasonings from the mental efforts of nations in the early periods of their history, &c. They do not possess, to that number desirable, those parts of speech, such as conjunctions and relative pronouns, which are used to connect sentences



and clauses of sentences, and to show their distinction from each other, or opposition. It appeared at §. 154, that these classes of words, which are evidently very important in long and connected trains of thought, and also adverbs and prepositions, are subsequent in their origin to nouns and verbs; in other words, that, in the formation of a language, these are the parts, which are completed last.

Under these circumstances, their reasonings, as might be expected, are applied to the minds of people by a variety of obvious and familiar illustrations,—by means of apologues and parables.—When Menennius Agrippa (year two hundred and sixty of the Roman republic) wishes to convince the people of the necessity of subordination to the regularly constituted government, he lays down no abstract proposition and enters into no argument. The historian informs us, that he merely related, in an antiquated and uncouth way, the story of a rebellion on the part of the other-members of the body, the hands, the mouth, and the teeth, against the stomach, and leaves them to make an application of it. The people understood what he meant.

Not to say any thing of the apologues and parables attributed to Æsop and others, the Bible itself, written for the most part at a very early period, helps to illustrate these remarks. Who does not recollect the apologue of the trees by Jotham in the book of Judges, that of the two men in one city by Nathan, and a multitude of others;—in particular, the interesting parables of the Saviour?

#### §. 181. Of the style of civilized and scientific nations.

As a nation advances in knowledge, its language becomes more strictly conventional, losing by degrees the metaphorical aspect, which it presented in its earlier periods. A variety of new words are introduced, which previously had no existence, because the things, for which they stand, were not then known. New arts have their technical names and epithets, and new sciences furnish with their novel nomenclatures.

The distiller speaks of the cohobation of liquors; the

r in mines of collieries ; the chemist of sulphates and  
 tes ; the botanist and mineralogist employ a variety  
 ns, peculiar to their respective departments. An  
 sed refinement and abstraction discovers itself in  
 appropriated to moral, political, and literary sub-  
 and the language in all respects is more removed  
 the senses, and becomes more intellectual. But  
 it is, by a natural consequence of mental improve-  
 more exact and scientific, it is less directly and  
 gely indicative of the passions of men, and is, there-  
 ess poetical. A Savage, if he had the most refined  
 age of Europe at his command, would be at a loss  
 ress in it the fiery emotions of his bosom ; he would  
 e the dialect of his tribe.

Characteristics of languages depend much on the habits,  
 &c. of the people.

ividual writers, as already observed, have a style,  
 , characteristics of expression, of their own ; for  
 one has a tendency to connect together thoughts or  
 , which are the signs of thought, agreeably to his  
 iar passions, and intellectual habits. But languages  
 considered in their whole extent, have a style ; be-  
 the nations, the whole mass of people, that make  
 those languages, have their characteristics, as well  
 ividuals. It, follows, then, from this, that languages  
 e their general character or style, in a good meas-  
 om that of the people ; and this is what we are  
 g to maintain. It will be found, that the language  
 ry people has words, combinations of words, pecu-  
 es of grammatical construction, &c. springing entire-  
 of the national habits and the exigencies of their  
 iar circumstances. Thus,—We have the word, cor-  
 in Hebrew, ANGGAROS in Persian, OSTRAKISMOS in  
 , PROSCRIPTIO and VIRTUS in Latin ; words, which  
 ther wholly peculiar to their respective languages, or  
 yed with some peculiarity of meaning, not elsewhere  
 wledged. We find combinations of words and pe-  
 ities of grammatical construction in the Hebrew and  
 gnate dialects, which we do not find in the languages

of modern Europe ; and this will be more or less the case in all other languages or classes of languages, which we may compare together.

The single fact, without going into particulars, that no person can become fully acquainted with the true import and spirit of a language, without an acquaintance with the geography of their country and its natural scenery, without a knowledge of the dress, buildings, arts, religion, customs, and history of the people, seems enough in support of the remark, that languages take their character from the circumstances of those, who speak them. If the fact, on which the conclusion is founded, be doubted, then we ask, why instructors consider it so essential, that their pupils should have a knowledge of the antiquities of the Romans, of the antiquities of the Greeks, of the antiquities of the Hebrews?—and why this course is pursued, or is acknowledged to be requisite, in respect to every other dead language?

§. 183. Languages help us in forming a correct idea of the national character.

If the statements in the preceding section be true, it follows, that a knowledge of languages very much helps us in acquiring a knowledge of the character of the people, who speak them. The study of every language is the examination of a new chapter in the history and operations of the mind ;—that is, of the mind, as it is modified by the peculiar circumstances, the climate, government, habits &c., of a people. Without an acquaintance, therefore, with their vernacular tongue, the critic will in vain take upon him, to judge of the philosophy of their literature and character. It is this, that breathes the national spirit ;—fixes and retains it after the nation itself is extinct.

Whatever may have been at any time thought, it will be found on examination, that those individuals, who are looked up to, as the eminent writers of a nation, seldom arise, until its language is nearly or quite completed. They employ it, as the people have formed it ; and the people have formed it, as their feelings and habits prompted.

§. 184. Of the correspondence between national intellect and the progress of a language.

The circumstance, that language is a great and admirable instrument of intellectual power, is of itself so small confirmation of the doctrine, that developments of intellectual strength will correspond to the progressive improvement of a language, and that its great men, those, who are to speak in it long as it shall exist, will not make their appearance, until it have arrived to some degree of perfection.

Let it be supposed, that in the midst of a Savage tribe, whose language is rude, a person is found of perfect mental organization, capable of remembering, separating, and comparing ideas, with a quickness of invention, and other qualities of genius above the common lot. He has influence over the minds of others; he is consulted in difficult emergencies; he is accounted wise; but how far he falls short of the mark, which is reached by others of originally so greater genius, who appear in a civilized community with the advantage of a perfect language!

"It is with languages (says Condillac) as with geometrical signs; they give a new insight into things, and dilate the mind in proportion as they are more perfect. Sir Isaac Newton's extraordinary success was owing to the choice which had been already made of signs, together with the contrivance of methods of calculation. Had he appeared earlier, he might have been a great man for the age he would have lived in, but he would not have been the admiration of ours. It is the same in every other branch of learning. The success of geniuses, who have had the happiness even of the best organization, depends entirely on the progress of the language in regard to the age in which they live; for words answer to geometrical signs, and the manner of using them to methods of calculation. In a language, therefore, defective in words, or whose construction is not sufficiently easy and convenient, we should meet with the same obstacles as occurred in geometry before the invention of algebra. The French tongue was for a long time so unfavourable to the progress

of the mind, that if we could frame an idea of Corneille successively in the different ages of our monarchy, we should find him to have been possessed of less genius in proportion to his greater distance from the age in which he lived, till at length we should reach a Corneille, who could not give the least mark of abilities." (Origin of Knowledge, part II. §. I.) This writer thinks, it may be demonstrated, that there can be no such thing, as a superior genius, (meaning probably a developement of superior genius,) till the language of a nation has been considerably improved.

§. 185. Different languages suited to different minds, and to different kinds of subjects.

Some languages are more suited to certain minds than they are to others ; more adapted also to the discussion of certain subjects, than others.—Accordingly the French language is simple, clear, precise, and, therefore, favourable, to abstract investigations.\* And it is here, it may be con-

\* The sentiment, here expressed in reference to the French language, is one which is proposed and cherished by the French themselves.—“J’ajouterois, (says Diderot as quoted in Stewart’s Historical Dissertation,) volontiers que la marche didactique et réglée, à laquelle notre langue es assujettie, la rend plus propre aux sciences ; et que par les tours et les inversions que le Grec, le Latin, l’Italien, l’Anglois, se permettent, ces langues sont plus avantageuses pour les lettres : Que nous pouvons mieux qu’aucun autre peuple faire parler l’esprit ; et que le bon sens choisiroit la langue François ; mais que l’imagination et les passions donneroient la préférence aux langues anciennes et à celles de nos voisins ; Qu’il faut parler François dans la société et dans les écoles de Philosophie ; et Grec, Latin, Anglois, dans les chaires et sur le Théâtre. \*\*\*\*

“Le François est fait pour instruire, éclairer, et convaincre ; le Grec, le Latin, l’Anglois, pour persuader, émouvoir, et tromper ; parlez Grec, Latin, Italien au peuple, mais parlez François au sage.” (*Œuvres de Diderot, Tome II.* pp. 70, 71. Amsterdam, 1772.)

ed, that we find one cause of the great excellence of mathematicians and philosophers of that nation: the Italian language is characterized by exceeding harmony; and is, therefore, suited to certain kinds of poetry, particularly elegiac. It also furnishes many terms, applicable in music.—The Spanish language seems to indicate its sonorous fulness, that dignified and measured simplicity, which is so well known to be characteristic of the people, who speak it. But it is as courteous, as it is splendid. It has abundance of terms, precisely suited to every form and degree of deference, courtesy, and respect. The order of chivalry first arose among the knights, and as all the members of that romantic institution were bound to be polite, as well as heroic, it naturally happened, that many expressions of respect and civility were introduced in that way, which have since been retained.

3. Views of the author of *Hermes* in respect to the English, and the Oriental languages.

Nations, (says the author of a *Philosophical Inquiry Concerning Universal Grammar*,) like single men have peculiar ideas. (These peculiar ideas become the basis of their language, since the symbol must of course correspond to its archetype. The wisest nations, having the most and best ideas, will consequently have the best and most copious languages. Others, whose languages are motley and compounded, and who have borrowed from different countries different arts and practices; disfigure words, to whom they are indebted for things.

To illustrate what has been said by a few examples. Borrowings in our time have been remarkable borrowings. Our multiform language may sufficiently shew. Terms in *polite literature* prove, that this came from France; our terms in *music* and *painting*, that these came from Italy; our phrases in *cooking* and *war*, that we take these from the French; and our phrases in *navigation* that we were taught by the Flemings and Low Dutch. Many and very different sources of our language shew the cause, why it is so deficient in regularity and

analogy. Yet we have this advantage to compensate defect, what we want in elegance we gain in copiousness in which last respect few languages will be found so good as to our own.

“ Let us pass from ourselves to the NATIONS OF THE EAST. The Eastern World, from the earliest date, has been at all times the seat of enormous monarchy. Liberty never shed its genial influence. Any time civil discords arose among them (and arise did innumerable) the contest was never about *the Form of Government*; for this was an object of which the combatants had no conception; it was all from the poor motives of *who should be their MASTER*, whether a *Cyrus* or an *Alexander*, a *Mahomet* or a *Mustapha*.

“ Such was their condition, and what was the consequence?—Their ideas became consonant to their state, and their words became consonant to their ideas. The great distinction, forever in their sight, was that of *tyrant* and *slave*; the most unnatural one conceivable, and most susceptible of pomp, and empty exaltation. Hence they talked of kings as gods, and of themselves, as the meanest and most abject reptiles. Nothing was either great or little in moderation, but every sentiment was heightened by incredible hyperbole. Though they sometimes ascended into the great and magnificent, they as frequently degenerated into the tumid and bombast.”

§. 187. Opinions of the same author in respect to the Greek and Roman character and literature.

“ And what sort of people may we pronounce them?—A nation, engaged in wars and commotions, some foreign, some domestic, which for seven hundred years wholly engrossed their thoughts. Hence, therefore, their language became, like their ideas, copious in all terms expressive of things political, and well adapted to the purposes both of history and popular eloquence. But what was their PHILOSOPHY? As a nation, it was not so, if we may credit their ablest writers. And hence the unfitness of their language to this subject; a defect,

even Cicero is compelled to confess, and more fully makes appear, when he writes philosophy himself, from the number of terms, which he is obliged to invent. Virgil seems to have judged the most truly of his countrymen, when, admitting their inferiority in the more elegant arts, he concludes at last with his usual majesty,

TU REGERE IMPERIO POPULOS, Romane, memento,  
(Ilæ tibi erunt artes) pacisque, imponere morem,  
Parcere subjectis, et debellare superbos.

"From considering the Romans let us pass to the Greeks. The Grecian Commonwealths, while they maintained their liberty, were the most heroic confederacy that ever existed. They were the politest, the bravest, and the wisest of men. In the short space of little more than a century, they became such statesmen, warriors, orators, historians, physicians, poets, critics, painters, sculptors, architects, and (last of all) philosophers, that one can hardly help considering that golden period, as a providential event in honour of human nature, to shew to what perfection the species might ascend.

"Now the language of these Greeks was truly like themselves, it was conformable to their transcendent and universal genius. Where matter so abounded, words followed of course, and those exquisite in every kind, as the ideas for which they stood. And hence it followed, there was not a subject to be found, which could not with propriety be expressed in Greek."\*

#### §. 183. Requisites of an interpreter of languages.

From the views, which have now been taken of the characteristics of language, we are led to educe a number of inferences, which may be stated in the form of rules or principles of interpretation;—wishing to observe, however, that both the subject of the characteristics of languages and that of interpretation are worthy of a more extensive examination, than can be expected from such abridged hints etc. They open a wide field for literary exertion, which

LEAVES for a Philosophical Inquiry concerning Universal Grammar by James Harris, Bk. III. Ch. V.



has been zealously occupied by a few critics, particularly among the Germans;\* and with such success, as to encourage others to emulate their example. Those, who pursue it, cannot fail to meet with encouragement. The subject of the nature and interpretation of language is in itself independent of any remote consequences, one of exceeding interest, and demands success. When INTERPRETATION is conducted on the principles here laid down, it is no longer a business of conjugations and declensions merely, it is not a mere dry comparison of words, but the study of the philosophy of human nature.

**RULE FIRST ;**—The interpreter must have a good, grammatical knowledge of the vernacular tongue of the writer, whom he interprets. This, no doubt, is evident ;—it being a necessary preliminary step.

**RULE SECOND ;**—The interpreter should have a philosophical knowledge of the language. Something more is necessary than a knowledge of single words, of declensions and conjugations, and of the rules of syntax. He must be acquainted with the prevailing spirit, or what are in this chapter termed the characteristics of the language. He must inform himself of the history of the people, learn their peculiar associations, their customs, the state of the arts, &c. In no other way can he understand the true spirit, or have, what may be otherwise called, a philosophical knowledge of any language ; and without such knowledge he can never do justice to his author. (See §. 182.)

**RULE THIRD ;**—He must know something of the author himself, whatever is peculiar in his situation, or in other words, his personal history. If languages have characteristics or a style of their own, it is certainly not less true of individual authors ; and this diversity is partly owing to the peculiarities of their private fortunes. We cannot dissent from the saying of Petruchio in the play—

“ ’Tis the mind, that makes the body rich.”

It may be safely admitted, that the mind is not wholly dependent on outward circumstances. If it be truly great, it will show something of the excellence of its nature

\*Among others, Herder, Ernesti, Morus, Meyer, Keil, &c.

uations, in want, in woe, in persecution, in ignorance as the "sun breaks through clouds." But it is no rue, that circumstances are never without their influence; they give to the mind a new direction; and almost to it, in some instances, a new character. Hence importance of this rule. We are to inquire amid what variety of nature the writer dwelt? What early superstitions were made familiar to the mind? In what political and religious principles he was educated? What was his natural calling and the degree of his rank in life? What was his treatment from men? and what his peculiar views of man and character? And it is not, until these things are known to us, that we are fully prepared to estimate the value of what he has written.

The remarks here made admit of an illustration in the writings of all writers of any original genius. But to take an example, which is familiar, and on that account perhaps is chosen, it may be confidently said, that they may be traced from the writings of the New Testament. We observe a difference in the style of Matthew and Luke, of Mark and John. The situation in which they were placed, the circumstances under which they acted, had undoubtedly influence on their character, and through their character on their writings, but this was not the whole origin of the peculiarities. Even the natural temperament of the writer, by a powerful sympathy, communicates itself to his written composition; and while that of Paul is abrupt and vehement, like the soul of its author, that of John seems to press, in its very words and combinations, his affectionate disposition.

The apostle Paul, in particular, is a fortunate instance, to show the importance of attending to the peculiarities of individual writers. Peculiarities—whatever cause they have arisen from—may be discovered in his writings, and in the use even of single words. For instance, the word *αἵματι*, signifying to remove, destroy, kill, make free, is seldom found in any Greek classic author, but is used twenty six times in the apostle's writings; only once in the other books of the New Testament.

St. Paul has sometimes employed such words, as *hē found* used in common conversation, and which, although not unfrequent in common discourse, would have hardly been considered admissible in classical writers, certainly not in the sense, in which he employs them. The word, *EXOUSIA*, (1 Cor. xi. 10,) primarily means power, dignity, &c; but appears, by a fashion, which sometimes exists in language no less than in dress and in manners, to have been in the city of Corinth, the name of a woman's head-dress, which was worn, at the time of writing the Epistle to the Corinthians, in that city. There is no reason to think, that it is used in this sense by any other writer, either of the pure Greek, or the Hebraistic. When, therefore, we learn in regard to the apostle Paul, that he was brought up in the doctrines of the Pharisees, that he afterwards embraced the christian religion, that he was driven from place to place, and resided in many cities, in Rome, in Ephesus, and particularly in Corinth, that he was a person of great boldness, decision, and enterprise; a knowledge of these circumstances in his personal fortunes and character throws much light on his writings

RULE FOURTH;—The views, which have been given, lead us to remark, as another and fourth rule, that the interpreter should possess an intimate acquaintance with the particular subject, on which his author treats;—and not only this, should endeavour fully to possess himself of the spirit of the particular species of writing, of which the tract to be interpreted is a specimen, whether it be poetry, the style of essays, of mathematical treatises, of history, or of philosophy.

Nothing is more clear, than that the human mind, when called into exercise, will be differently affected according to the nature of that particular subject, to which its attention is directed. It will be characterized by calm reflections on the more intimate nature or the philosophy of created things; or will be thrown into a series of closely concatenated propositions; or will be animated by a creative power and form thousands of new and glowing images; or will be excited by strong and declamatory impulses as

according to the characteristic tendencies of the exercise, about which it is employed. The interpreter cannot do him justice without having his own mind brought into a similar position with the original author's; and in order to this, he must be acquainted not only with the subject of the particular writing in question, but also with the characteristics and spirit of that species of writing, to which it belongs. It would be presumption, not to say injustice in a mathematician, who had exclusively devoted himself to his chosen science, to undertake to pass sentence on the productions of a poet; those mental tendencies and that state of mind, which are adapted to the last mentioned department of literature, not being fitted to the former. It would be no less presumption and injustice for a mere painter to assume the criticism of musical compositions, or for a mere man of polite letters to attempt the interpretation of the writings and an estimation of the character of mathematicians.

**NOTE.** It may seem to be a proper place here, to mention a peculiar difficulty in the interpretation of the Bible, arising from the nature of the subjects there treated of. Revelation is a communication of those things, which could not have been fully learnt, and some of them could not have been learnt in any degree, by our unassisted faculties. It is a declaration of such facts, as eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard.

As, therefore, we derive our ideas from sensation and from what takes place in our own minds, it ought not to surprise us, that our weak and limited understandings are incapable of forming a perfect conception of God, of angels, of spiritual bodies, of the soul being brought to judgment, of the resurrection from the dead, &c. The words, which are employed on these subjects, are not without meaning, but such is the nature of the things signified by the words, that the meaning of them is often necessarily obscure to us; and we here find a favourable opportunity for the exercise of that religious feeling, which is called faith, as to the things themselves, and also for the exercise of charity, when our own interpretations do not agree with those of any of our erring fellow beings.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEENTH.

### LAWS OF MENTAL ASSOCIATION.

§. 189. Of the meaning of mental association and of its general principles or laws.

**O**UR thoughts and feelings follow each other in a regular train. Of this statement no one needs any other proof, than his individual experience. We all know, not only, that our minds are susceptible of new states, but what is more, that this capability of new states is not fortuitous, but has its laws. Therefore, we not only say, that our thoughts and feelings succeed each other, but that this antecedence and sequence is in a *regular* train; a circumstance in our intellectual economy, which, it may be just observed, has the most direct and important bearing on our preservation and happiness. To this regular and established consecution of the states of the mind we give the name of MENTAL ASSOCIATION.

The term, ASSOCIATION, is perhaps preferable to any other. It may, with no little appearance of reason, be objected to the word, SUGGESTION, which has sometimes been employed, that it seems to imply a positive power or efficiency of the preceding state of the mind in producing the subsequent. But of the existence of such an efficiency we have no evidence. All that we know is the fact, that our thoughts and feelings, under certain circumstances, appear together and keep each other company;—And this is what is understood to be expressed, and is all, that is expressed, by the term, ASSOCIATION.

By the laws of association, we mean no other than the general designation of those circumstances, under which the regular consecution of mental states, which has been mentioned, occurs. The following may be mentioned as among the primary, or more important of those laws, although it is not necessary to take upon us to assert, either that the enumeration is complete, or that some better arrangement of them might not be proposed,—viz., RESEMBLANCE, CONTRAST, CONTIGUITY in time and place, and CAUSE and EFFECT.

§. 190. Resemblance the first general law of association.

New trains of ideas and new emotions are occasioned by resemblance; but when we say, that they are occasioned in this way, all that is meant is, that there is a new state of mind, immediately subsequent to the perception of the resembling object. Of the efficient cause of this new state of mind under these circumstances, we can only say, the Creator of the soul has seen fit to appoint this connection in its operations, without our being able, or deeming it necessary to give any further explanation. A traveller, wandering in a foreign land, finds himself in the course of his sojournings in the midst of aspects of nature not unlike those, where he has formerly resided, and the fact of this resemblance becomes the antecedent to new states of mind. There is distinctly brought before him the scenery, which he has left, his own woods, his waters, and his home.—The emperor Napoleon, conversing on the subject of religious feeling and belief, once expressed himself thus. “Last Sunday evening, in the general silence of nature, I was walking in these grounds, (at Malmaison.) The sound of the church-bell of Rueil upon my ear, and renewed all the impressions of my youth. I was profoundly affected, such is the power of my associations and habit; and I considered, if such is the case with me, what must be the effect of such reflections upon the more simple and credulous vulgar? Is your philosophers answer that. The people must have

\* Scott's Life of Napoleon, vol. III. ch. xxxiv.

a religion."—The result is the same in any other case; whenever there is a resemblance between what we now experience, and what we have previously experienced. We have been acquainted, for instance, at some former period with a person, whose features appeared to us to possess some peculiarity, a breadth and openness of the forehead, an uncommon expression of the eye, or some other striking mark;—to-day we meet a stranger in the crowd, by which we are surrounded, whose features are of a somewhat similar cast, and the resemblance at once vividly suggests the likeness of our old acquaintance.

§.191. Resemblance in every particular not necessary.

It is not necessary, that the RESEMBLANCE should be complete in every particular, in order to its being a principle or law of association. It so happens, (to use an illustration of Brown,\*) that we see a painted portrait of a female countenance, which is adorned with a ruff of a peculiar breadth and display; and we are, in consequence, immediately reminded of queen Elizabeth. Not because there is any resemblance between the features before us and those of the English sovereign, but because in all the painted representations, which we have seen of her, she is uniformly set off with this peculiarity of dress, with a ruff like that, which we now see. Here the resemblance between the suggesting thing and that, which is suggested, is not a complete resemblance, does not exist in all the particulars, in which they may be compared together, but is limited to a part of the dress.

\* That a single resembling circumstance, (and perhaps one of no great importance,) should so readily suggest the complete conception of another object or scene, which is made up of a great variety of parts, seems to admit of some explanation in this way. We take, for example, an individual;—the idea, which we form of the individual is a complex one, made up of the forehead, eyes, lips, hair, general figure, dress, &c. These separate, subordinate ideas, when combined together, and viewed as a whole, have

\* Brown's Philosophy of the Human Mind, Lect. xxxv.

near analogy to any of our ideas, which are compounded and are capable of being resolved into elements more simple. When, therefore, we witness a ruff of a size and decoration more than ordinary, we are at once reminded of that ornament in the habiliments of the British queen; and this on the ground of resemblance. But this article in the decorations of her person is the foundation of only one part of a very complex state of mind, which embraces the features and the general appearance. As there has been a long continued co-existence of those separate parts, which make up this complex state, the recurrence to the mind of one part or of one idea is necessarily attended with the recurrence of all the others. They sustain the relation of near friends; they form a group, and do not easily and willingly admit of a separation. The principle, which maintains in the relation of co-existence such states of the mind, as may be considered as grouped together, is the same with that, which so steadily and permanently combines the parts of mixed modes or other complex ideas, and is no less effectual in its operation.

§. 19<sup>th</sup>. Of resemblance in the effects produced.

Resemblance operates, as an associating principle, not only when there is a likeness or similarity in the things themselves, but also when there is a resemblance in the effects, which are produced upon the mind.

The ocean, when greatly agitated by the winds, and threatening every moment to overwhelm us, produces in the mind an emotion, similar to that, which is caused by the presence of an angry man, who is able to do us harm. And in consequence of this similarity in the effects produced, they reciprocally bring each other to our recollection.

Dark woods, hanging over the brow of a mountain, cause in us a feeling of awe and wonder, like that, which we feel, when we behold, approaching us, some aged person, whose form is venerable for his years, and whose name is renowned for wisdom and justice. It is in reference to this view of the principle, on which we are remarking, that



the following comparison is introduced in Akenside's *Pleasures of the Imagination*.

—————"Mark the sable woods,  
 "That shade sublime yon mountain's nodding brow;  
 "With what religious awe the solemn scene  
 "Commands your steps! As if the reverend form  
 "Of Minos or of Numa should forsake  
 "The Elysian seats, and down the embowering glade  
 "Move to your pausing eye."

As we are so constituted, that all nature produces in us certain effects, causes certain emotions, similar to those, which are caused in us in our intercourse with our fellow-beings, it so happens that, in virtue of this fact, the natural world becomes living, unimaged, operative. The ocean is in *anger*; the sky *smiles*; the cliff *frowns*; the aged woods are *venerable*; the earth and its productions are no longer a dead mass, but have an existence, a soul, an agency.

We see here the foundation of metaphorical language; and it is here, that we are to look for the principles, by which we are to determine the propriety or impropriety of its use.

In every metaphor there is some analogy or resemblance; it is a comparison or simile in its most concise form. There is an examination instituted; and circumstances of similitude are detected; not, however, by a long and laborious process, but in a single word. Hence it is the language of strong emotion; and as such, is peculiarly the language of uncivilized nations, and, in general, of the most spirited parts of the poetry of those, that are civilized. ♀

§. 193. Resemblances in the sound of words; alliteration, &c.

Our states of mind are associated, one with another, not merely by resemblances existing in the external and visible appearances of things, to which those states or ideas correspond; nor is the fact of their association limited to resemblances in the effects resulting from them; they may also be associated by similitudes of various degrees in the words, which are appointed, as their sign

which in a similar manner impress the organ of  
 , reciprocally suggest each other; and this is es-  
 true of words, whether they convey the same or  
 meaning, or not. Thus, it is not impossible, that  
 may suggest patches, and billets-doux may be  
 ed with Bibles, not because there is any resem-  
 in the things, between powders and patches, bil-  
 x and Bibles, but because the words begin with  
 e letters, and there is, consequently, a slight re-  
 ce in the sounds. It is evidently in consequence  
 operation of association in this manner, that we  
 see very things brought together in a line of Pope's  
 'the Lock;

'uffs, powders, patches, Bibles, billets-doux."

is an instance of what is termed **ALLITERATION**, an  
 in poetical style, which is not unfrequently em-  
 and sometimes with good effect.

**TERATION**, as the term is generally defined, is the  
 n of the same letter at the beginning of different  
 r any emphatic part of the same word, at certain  
 ervals. The following, in addition to the one al-  
 ven, are instances of this practice.

the high hill he heaves a huge round stone." Pope.  
 n he soothed the soul to pleasures." Dryden.  
 high-born Hoel's harp, or soft Llewellyn's lay." Gray.

poet often finds himself prodigally furnished with  
 which would be suitable for alliterations. And  
 less in such terms can be ascribed to nothing else,  
 faculty of association, operating in the manner  
 d; with this additional circumstance in the case  
 et, that the operation is quickened and made more  
 , by his practice of seeking for words, which have  
 ity of termination. It is possible, that the fre-  
 of the recurrence of such terms operates, as a  
 on to the poetical writer to employ them and to  
 izes, containing alliteration, more frequently than  
 to. Whatever may be the difference of opinion

as to the positive merit or want of merit in this species of ornament, all readily admit, that its value cannot be accounted great. It is, therefore, to be employed with caution, and suits better on slight occasions and in subjects of no very serious import, than in those of a solemn and important nature.

Its good results may, for the most part, be summed up in these particulars ;—(1) It sometimes affords us pleasure by reminding us of the power of the writer, who is able to express his meaning not only under the restraints of rhyme, but of those additional shackles, which alliteration so evidently imposes.—(2) Sometimes the meaning is more strongly expressed, than it could possibly be without alliteration, as in this instance ;

“Up the high hill he heaves a huge, round stone.”

The same might be shown in many other cases, especially in those, where the poet tries to imitate, which he sometimes does, by the structure and sound of his verses the thing, which he describes.—(3) As a rough stanza at times is thought to be no defect, but rather the contrary, because it improves the others by contrast ; so lines, with alliterations, which are imagined to fail on the other hand, or by excess of harmony, may break in upon the oftentimes monotonous sameness of poetic numbers, and improve the general aspect of the piece for the same reason, as the stanzas, that are inordinately deficient in smoothness.

#### §. 194. Contrast the second general or primary law.

CONTRAST is another law or principle, by which successive mental states are suggested ; or, in other terms, when there are two objects, or events, or situations of character precisely opposite, the idea or conception of one is immediately followed by that of the other. ( W the discourse is of the *palace* of the king, how often we reminded, in the same breath, of the *cottage* of the peasant ! And thus wealth and poverty, the cradle and the grave, hope and despair, are found in public speech and in declamations from the pulpit almost always going

together and keeping each other company. The truth is, they are connected together in our thoughts by a distinct and operative principle ; they accompany each other, not because there is any resemblance in the things thus associated, but in consequence of their very marked contrariety. Darkness reminds of light, heat of cold, friendship of enmity ; the sight of the conqueror is associated with the memory of the conquered, and when beholding men of deformed and dwarfish appearance, we are at once led to think of those of erect figure or of Patagonian size. Contrast, then, is no less a principle or law of association, than resemblance itself.)

Those writers, who describe human action and suffering, and who make it a point to be true to nature, furnish illustrations of the operations of this principle. In one of those deeply interesting sketches, which acquaint us with the sufferings of the early settlers of this country, and which are worthy of being read inasmuch as they teach us the worth of that peace and prosperity, which we now enjoyed, and the amount of toil and endurance, which purchased them, we find the following instance of the power of this law of our constitution.—“After my feelings were a little quickened by warmth, my sad portion was brought me, consisting of the duck’s head and a pill of broth. As I lifted the unsavoury morsel with a trembling hand to my mouth, I cast my thoughts back a few days to a time, when from a board plentifully spread in my own house, I ate my food with a merry heart. The wooden spoon dropped from my feeble hand. The contrast was too affecting.”\*

Count Lemaistre’s touching story, entitled, from the scene of its incidents, *THE LEPER OF AOST*, illustrates the effects of the principle of association now under consideration. Like all persons, affected with the leprosy, the subject of the disease is represented as an object of dread no less than of pity to others, and while he is an outcast from the society of men, he is a loathsome spectacle even

\*Narrative of the Captivity, &c., of Mrs. Johnson.

to himself. But what is the condition of his mind? What are the subjects of his thoughts? The tendencies of his intellectual nature prevent his thinking of wretchedness alone. His extreme misery aggravates itself by suggesting scenes of ideal happiness, and his mind revels in a paradise of delights, merely to give greater intensity to his actual woes by contrasting them with imaginary bliss—"I represent to myself continually (says the Leper) societies of sincere and virtuous friends; families, blessed with health, fortune, and harmony. I imagine, I see them walk in groves, greener and fresher, than these, the shade of which makes my poor happiness; brightened by a sun more brilliant, than that, which sheds its beams on me;—And their destiny seems to me as much more worthy of envy, in proportion as my own is the more miserable."

§. 195. Practical and moral applications of this principle.

The remarks, made in the preceding section on the *LEPER OF AOST*, naturally lead us to offer some brief observations on the practical and moral results of this law of association.

**FIRST**;—It operates as a powerful incitement to action, and may, therefore, in this respect be said to have a practical application.—A person finds himself poor, unknown, unhonoured. He is fully sensible of the position, which he holds, and it is a source of mortification and grief. But while he is deeply sensible of his poverty, obscurity, and want of influence, the busy interference of this law of his mental constitution constantly brings up in his mind the ideas of wealth, of honour, and of notoriety. As gilded edifices, although equally distant, appear nearer, than those of a less splendid exterior; so when the mind paints before us bright images of future good, we think them almost within our grasp, because we so distinctly behold them. As, therefore, the principle of contrast suggests to us some future happiness, when we are sensible, that our present condition and enjoyment are below what they might and should be, it may fairly be laid down among its good, practical results, that it

us with an incitement to exertion. And the more the views, which it presents to the mind, are general, and their influence will, of consequence, be proportionally augmented.

COND ;—It may be considered as one of the moral effects of this principle, that it operates as a source of strength to us, whenever those objects, which we have longed for, and in the pursuit of, have been obtained. The principle of contrast leads us back to what we were before we look down from our present circumstances as from a height, and the altitude, which we now occupy, seems to be increased, by the recollection of our former positions.

COND ;—Let it be remarked further, that CONSCIENCE is a great part of the power, which it is able to exert over the wicked, to this principle. It is from a knowledge of its tendencies, that solitary confinements have been so strongly recommended in public penitentiaries. Separate the prisoner from his associates, leave him no thoughts to follow each other as nature prompts, and what will be the subjects of them? He will think of what he once was, and compare it with what he now is. He will place side by side a good name with a bad one, the rewards of virtue with the deformities of vice, honour and glory, wretchedness and bliss, till the agitations of his bosom, the lashes of his own conscience become more terrible than chains, or any species of corporeal punishments.

It may be said, does not this principle of the mind operate in the same way in respect to the good, when they have been unfortunate? It undoubtedly does. They cannot do otherwise, of their former prosperity; their present ill success and depression appears therefore in consequence of such remembrances. But happily they are supported by a consciousness of rectitude which might be otherwise insupportable. It is a remark of Goldsmith, expressed in his happy manner, that of the noblest objects in the universe is a good man, struggling with adversity.

§. 196. This principle of association the foundation of antithesis.

In writers of acknowledged taste and discernment, we find the rhetorical figure of ANTITHESIS employed, which is (the placing of two objects or ideas in opposition.) The fact, that such writers occasionally employ this figure, might lead us to suppose, (which is the truth,) that it has its foundation in the human mind, viz. in the principle of association, to which we give the name of contrast. In one of the tragedies of Southern we find certain expressions, which are here introduced not only in illustration of the general principle, but as happily exemplifying some remarks in the preceding section.

—————"Could I forget  
 "What I have been, I might the better bear  
 "What I am destined to. I am not the first,  
 "That have been wretched ;—But to think how much  
 "I have been happier.————

Here the present is placed in opposition with the past, and happiness is contrasted with misery ; not by a cold and strained artifice, but by the natural impulses of the mind, which is led to associate together things, that are the reverse of each other. I say not by a cold artifice but naturally ;—for what man ever was there, or can be, that has been cast down from the heights of fortune, whether it have happened with his guilt or his innocence, and does not most readily and unavoidably look back from his present depressed condition to his former prosperities?

In the poem of the Pleasures of Hope there is the passage.

"Yet at thy call the hardy tar pursued,  
 "Pale, but intrepid, sad, but unsubdued.

As paleness is an appearance of the countenance, which is sometimes understood to indicate fear or cowardice, there is occasion given to mention the opposite ; the mind naturally thinks of it. A similar remark will apply to the last clause of the stanza, and the whole passage is not only spirited, but one of great ease and beauty.

The often repeated eulogium of Mr. Burke on the philanthropic Howard is a fine instance of this figure,

ows to what good purpose it may be applied on suitable occasions by persons of genius.—“He has visited all Europe,—not to survey the sumptuousness of palaces, or the stateliness of temples; not to make accurate measurements of the remains of ancient grandeur, not to form an idle of the curiosity of modern arts, nor to collect medals or collate manuscripts;—but to dive into the depths of dungeons; to plunge into the infection of hospitals; to survey the mansions of sorrow and pain; to take the gauge and dimensions of misery, depression, and contempt, to remember the forgotten, to attend to the neglected, to visit the forsaken, and compare and collate the distresses of all men in all countries.”—This figure of rhetoric, therefore, being founded in our mental constitution, is sometimes employed with success, but whenever there is such frequency in the use of it, as to betray artifice rather than natural emotion, it loses its effect, and becomes a vice rather than an excellence in style.

Antithesis is frequently employed, and to very good purpose, in short moral sayings, and in any writings whatever, which purposely adopt the concise and emphatic method of aphorisms. It is a great object with writers of this kind to have their sayings remembered. In throwing them into the form of antitheses, they afford great help to the memory, because when one part of the aphoristic sentence is known, the power of association, operating by the principle or law of contrast, immediately calls up the contrasted or parallel part of it.

#### §. 197. Contiguity, the third general or primary law.

Those thoughts and feelings, which have been connected together by nearness of time and place, are readily suggested by each other; and, consequently, contiguity in these respects is rightly reckoned, as another and third primary law of our mental associations. When we think of Palestine, for instance, we very readily and naturally think of the Jewish nation, of the patriarchs, of the prophets, of the Saviour, and of the apostles, because Palestine was their place of residence, and the theatre of their ac-



tions. So that this is evidently an instance, where suggestions are chiefly regulated by proximity of place. When a variety of acts and events have happened near at the same period, whether in the same place or not, is not thought of without the other being closely associated with it, owing to proximity of time. If, therefore, a particular event of the crucifixion of the Saviour be mentioned, we are necessarily led to think of various other events, which occurred about the same period, such as the treacherous conspiracy of Judas, the denial of Peter, the conduct of the Roman soldiery, the rending of the veil of the temple, and the temporary obscuration of the sun.

The mention of Egypt suggests the Nile, the Pyramids, Cæsar, Cleopatra, the battle of Aboukir. The naming of the AMERICAN REVOLUTION immediately fills the mind with recollections of Washington, Greene, and many of its associates, whose fortune it was to enlist their exertions in behalf of freedom in the same country and at the same period.

The following passage from captain King's continuation of Cooke's last voyage furnishes a remarkable example of the operations of this principle;—"While we were at anchor in this miserable hut, on the banks of the river, Avak, and the guests of a people, with whose existence we had before been scarce acquainted, and at the extreme end of the habitable globe, a solitary, half-worn, pewter spoon, whose shape was familiar to us, attracted our attention, and, on examination, we found it stamped on the back with the word, LONDON. I cannot pass over this circumstance in silence out of gratitude for the many pleasant thoughts the anxious hopes, and tender remembrances it excited in us. Those, who have experienced the effects, that absence, and extreme distance from their native country produce in the mind, will readily conceive the pleasure such a trifling incident can give."—The beauty of this illustration consists not so much in the city or place here been suggested in consequence of their seeing its name impressed on the pewter spoon, although this may be supposed to have happened on the principle of contiguity.

the circumstance, that such a multitude of other pleasing reflections thronged around the memory of that place. When they thought of London, they thought of their friends; they thought of the inmates of those homes; they thought of a thousand incidents which they had there witnessed; a striking illustration of the degree of importance, which may be accumulated on the most trifling circumstance, when that circumstance can be made to connect itself effectually with any general principles of mental constitution.

That, which we have set down, as the third general law of mental association, is more extensive in its influence than any others. It has been remarked with truth, that contiguity in time and place forms the whole calendar of the great mass of mankind. They pay but little attention to the arbitrary eras of chronology; but date events by the month, and speak of what happened at the time of the dark day, or of some great eclipse, or of some war or revolution, or when one neighbour built a house, or another a child. The practice of associating a considerable number of facts with some place, or with some event too eminent and wonderful to be easily forgotten, is the most important and almost the only instrument, which the mass of people employ in retaining the multitude of particulars of personal or local nature.

§. 198. Cause and effect the fourth primary law.

There are certain facts or events, which hold to each other the relation of invariable antecedence and sequence. That fact or event, to which some other one sustains the relation of constant antecedence, is in general called an *effect*;—And that fact or event, to which some other one holds the relation of invariable sequence, has in general the name of a *cause*. Now there may be no resemblance between the things, which reciprocally bear this relation, there may be no contrariety, and it is by no means necessary, that they should be contiguous in time or place, as the meaning of the term, contiguity, is commonly understood. There may be *CAUSE* and *EFFECT* without any one or all of these

circumstances. But it is a fact, which is known to every one's experience, that when we think of the cause in a particular instance, we naturally think of the effect, and, the contrary, the knowledge or recollection of the effect brings to mind the cause ;—And in view of this well-known and general experience, there is good reason for reckoning CAUSE and EFFECT among the general principles of mental associations. What we here understand by principles or laws will be recollected, viz. The general designation of those circumstances, under which the regular succession of mental states occurs.

It is on the principle of cause and effect, that when we see a surgical instrument or any engine of torture, we have an idea of the pain, which they are fitted to occasion, and for a moment are tempted to imagine, that we ourselves are partially the subjects of it. The sight of a wound, inflicted however long before, suggests to us the instrument by which it was made. When we witness any of our fellow beings in distress, we naturally think of the particular cause of it, if we know what it is ; and if we are ignorant we make it a subject of inquiry. When we have good news to communicate, we please ourselves with the thought of the joy, which it will occasion, and the bearer of afflictive tidings cannot but anticipate the grief, which the continuation of them will produce.

#### §. 199. Secondary laws of mental association.

There are a variety of circumstances, which modify or slightly control the influence of the general laws of association, and these by way of distinction are called SECONDARY. They are as follows ;—

(1) Our mental states will, in the first place, be more or less readily associated, according as they existed together for a greater or less length of time at first. Innumerable objects pass before us, which but very slightly arrest our attention ; and although a connection is formed among them by the general principles of association, the connection is weak and easily broken, and always of short duration. We cannot, therefore, in general rely on the future ren-

brance of objects, unless we feel so much interest in them, as to lead us to dwell on them for some time.—(2) The probability of our mental states being associated by the general laws, will depend in some measure, secondly, on the character of the original feelings, and will be greater or less, according as those feelings were *more or less lively*. Bright objects are more readily recalled, than faint or obscure; also great joys and sorrows, while the many slight pleasures and pains, which are constantly occurring, are almost instantly forgotten.

(3) The parts of any mental train are the more readily suggested; thirdly, in proportion as they have been the *more frequently renewed*. Having read a sentence a number of times, we find ourselves able to repeat it out of book, which we could not do with merely reading it once.

(4) In the fourth place, our trains of thought and emotions will be found to be more or less strongly connected, according as they are *more or less recent*. We remember many incidents, even of a trifling nature, which occurred to-day or the present week, while those of yesterday or of last week are forgotten. There is an exception to this law, which should be mentioned. The associated feelings of old men, which were formed in their youth and the early part of manhood, are more readily revived, than those of later origin. This point will be further remarked on in the chapter on MEMORY. This exception, however, it may be observed here, does not hold universally, even in the case of extreme age. The general rule holds, when the time is not extended far back. Events, which happened but a few hours before, are remembered, while there is an utter forgetfulness of those, which happened a few weeks or even days before.

(5) Our feelings, in the fifth place, are associated more strongly, as each has coexisted *less* with other feelings. When we have heard a song but from one person, it can scarcely be heard by us again without recalling that person to our memory. If we have heard the same words and air frequently sung by others, there is much less chance of this particular suggestion.

(6) The primary or general laws of association are modified, in the sixth place, by diversities in temper and disposition.—In the minds of two persons, the one of a cheerful, the other of a gloomy disposition, the trains of thought will be very different. This difference is finely illustrated in those beautiful poems of Milton, *L'ALLEGRO*, and *IL PENSEROSO*. *L'ALLEGRO* or the cheerful man finds pleasure and cheerfulness in every object, which he beholds;—The great sun puts on his amber light, the mower whets his scythe, the milk-maid sings,

“And every shepherd tells his tale

“Under the hawthorn in the dale.

But the man of a melancholy disposition, *IL PENSEROSO*, chooses the evening for his walk, as most suitable to the temper of his mind; he listens from some lonely hillock to the distant curfew, and loves to hear the song of that “sweet bird,

—That shun’st the noise of folly,

“Most musical, most melancholy.

Further;—Our trains of suggested thoughts will be modified by those temporary feelings, which may be regarded, as exceptions to the more general character of our dispositions. The cheerful man is not always cheerful, nor is the melancholy man at all times equally sober and contemplative. They are known to exchange characters for short periods, sometimes in consequence of good or ill health, or of happy or adverse fortune, and sometimes for causes, which cannot be easily explained. So that our mental states will be found to follow each other with a succession, varying not only with the general character of our temper and dispositions, but with the transitory emotions of the day or hour.

(7) The trains of our suggestions are modified, in the seventh place, by our particular pursuit or profession in life.—When men of different pursuits or professions read a book, or hear a story, it will be seen, that they associate very different ideas with what they hear or read. If a traveller happens in their company, the man of letters immediately inquires what new works are about to be p

lished in his country ; the merchant is anxious to hear of the price of wheat or iron ; the soldier insists on knowing, who is to take the place of the general or field-marshal lately displaced ; and the politician requests an explanation of the late manifesto, or to be informed of the articles of the new constitution.

(8) The general or primary principles, by which our thoughts are connected together, are modified, eighthly, by an additional circumstance of so much influence, as to entitle it to be reckoned among the secondary laws of association ; viz., *constitutional differences in mental character*.—Whether the origin of such differences, is to be referred to the mind itself, or to varieties in bodily temperament, is not necessary for our present purpose to be inquired into. Admitting the existence of such original diversities, we may suppose them, in the first place, to have the effect either of limiting and weakening, or of extending and augmenting the power of all the primary laws of association. In other words, they have a *general* influence, either favourable or unfavourable. The great varieties in the power of remembering, which are so often observed, may be attributed chiefly to this secondary law, and to that form of its influence, which has just been supposed, and is a proof of the correctness of this supposition.—But original, constitutional differences sometimes modify the influence of the four general and primary laws of association in another and less impartial way ; viz., by giving greater strength to one set of associations, than to another. Thus,—the mental associations, which are formed and sustained on the principle of resemblance or analogy, constitute one class ; those, which are connected by the law of contiguity, form another ; and here it is, that we mark a distinction in the mental operations of men, which we think must be ascribed to original diversities in the intellectual organization. In one mind, for instance, the associations, which are ranked under one of these classes, are easily and readily suggested ; the other class of associations is not ;—but observe another person, in whom there is, as we contend, a constitutional difference, and we



nature, in order to excel in any one thing whatever. But stated in other, and, as we conceive, in more philosophical language, because it intimates with greater precision the ground or cause of this aptitude to excel, genius is a constitutional tendency, to form mental associations on the principles of RESEMBLANCE, of CONTRAST, and of CAUSE and EFFECT.

Persons, who discover a prevailing or constitutional inclination to form associations on the law of CONTIGUITY in time and place, are justly considered to be wanting in those penetrating and effective qualities, which are implied in genius. With just claims to the character of good neighbours and useful citizens, and with undoubted aptitude to excel in the manual practice of the mechanical arts, they cannot reasonably be expected to give new beauties to literature, or new truths to science.

§ 201. Prevailing laws of association in poetry and in the sciences.

Although the primary laws of association, excepting CONTIGUITY, enter more or less into the constitution of genius, they do not always exist and operate with the same degree of power in the same individual. In poetical genius, the law of resemblance or analogy appears to predominate.—Thus, Lucan, in the poem of the *Pharsalia*, compares Pompey, the hero of the Poem to an aged and leafless oak, which is mighty, and venerable in its desolation. Goldsmith illustrates the religious character of his Village Pastor, as exhibited in relation to his present trials and his future hopes, by likening him to the mountain cliff, whose centre is girded with storms, but whose top is glowing with sunshine.—Undoubtedly, these are resemblances, which would not have occurred to persons, whose thoughts were chiefly governed by the law of contiguity.

Philosophical genius, in its various applications, implies not only perceptions of analogies, but associations of thought, governed by the law of CAUSE and EFFECT. A mind of this character readily passes from the things themselves to their results; and from the observation of some resemblance in present objects or events, it clearly fore-



sees a corresponding analogy in the consequences, which are to follow. But then it is to be observed, that a man may have much philosophical knowledge, without being a philosophical genius ; he may learn all, that others have discovered, without being able to make discoveries himself.

From the above remarks in this section, it would seem to follow, that the elements of genius approach each other, and are very nearly the same in the different departments of literature and science. But how happens it, that men, whose intellectual character in its elementary constitution so nearly approximates, devote themselves to pursuits so different both in their nature and results? The most obvious reply, is, that we are influenced by a great variety of circumstances, and are not unfrequently influenced by them, when we are ourselves not fully sensible of it ; such as the mental character of those, with whom we associate, local scenery, natural disposition, climate, government, early reading, &c. These give a direction to those qualities, which constitute genius ; and it happens in this way, that of those persons, whose mental capabilities were originally the same, one gives himself to the science of laws, another to natural philosophy, another to poetry, another to some other of the fine arts.

These views readily suggest an explanation of differences in degrees or strength of genius. There may be a tendency in different individuals to form associations on laws, which involve the resemblances or the relations of objects, rather than on the law of mere contiguity ; and this is the prominent circumstance in securing to them the character in question. But it does not follow, that this trait exists in the same degree and with the same strength in all. In some it is more, in others less. To a few the power of perceiving the analogies, and dissimilarities, and general relations of things is exceedingly great ;—and it is to these alone that we can rightly give the credit of great geniuses, of being the “lights of their age.”

NOTE. Genius, in the abstract sciences, and in the arts, involving scientific principles, makes itself known by

inventions and discoveries. But there is a difference between the two. Mr. Stewart, in remarking (ELEMENTS, VOL. I., CH. V.) on invention in the arts and sciences, thus states and illustrates the distinction.

"Before we proceed, it may be proper to take notice of the distinction between Invention and Discovery. The object of the former, as has been frequently remarked, is to produce something which had no existence before; that of the latter, to bring to light something which did exist, but which was concealed from common observation. Thus we say, Otto Guericke invented the air-pump; Sanctorius invented the thermometer; Newton and Gregory invented the reflecting telescope; Galileo discovered the solar spots; and Harvey discovered the circulation of the blood. It appears, therefore, that improvements in the Arts are properly called *inventions*; and that facts, brought to light by means of observation, are properly called *discoveries*.

Agreeable to this analogy is the use, which we make of these words, when we apply them to subjects purely intellectual. As truth is eternal and immutable, and has no dependence on our belief or disbelief of it, a person, who brings to light a truth formerly unknown, is said to make a discovery. A person, on the other hand, who contrives a new method of discovering truth, is called an inventor. Pythagoras, we say, discovered the forty-seventh proposition of Euclid's first book; Newton discovered the binomial theorem; but he invented the method of prime and ultimate ratios; and he invented the method of fluxions.

In general, every advancement in knowledge is considered as a discovery; every contrivance, by which we produce an effect, or accomplish an end, is considered as an invention. Discoveries in science, therefore, unless they are made by accident, imply the exercise of invention; and, accordingly, the word *invention* is commonly used to express originality of genius in the sciences, as well as in the arts."

## §. 202. Dependence of transitions in style on association.

It requires skill rightly to manage the TRANSITIONS in a discourse or poem, to conduct the hearer or reader from one topic to another without violence to his feelings, and without injury to the natural order, clearness, and interest of the subject. No transitions seem to be admissible, but such as are suggested by association, either by the primary laws alone, or as they are modified by the secondary laws. But when that power holds out a number of ways, in which the passing from one topic to another can be effected, the writer has an opportunity to discover his skill in the selection.

In Goldsmith's poem of the Traveller, the nature of the subject requires frequent transitions, and they are happily managed. In one part of his poem, he describes the descendants of the Romans in their state of effeminy and debasement; but how does it happen, that immediately after he undertakes a description of the character of the Swiss? In speaking of the present inhabitants of Italy, he sees hardly any thing but indications of indolence and luxury,—but little of vigour, of hardship, of ancient truth. He is led, therefore, by the principle of contrast, to think of conduct, characters, and situations directly the reverse. To think, then, of the Swiss under such circumstances seemed to be almost unavoidable;

“My soul turn from them—turn we to survey,

“Where rougher climes a nobler race display,

“Where the bleak Swiss their stormy mansions tread,

“And force a churlish soil for scanty bread.

## §. 203. Of associations suggested by present objects of perception.

Associated thoughts and emotions, when made to pass through the mind by some sound, which the ear has caught by some object, which has met the eye, or any present object of perception whatever, are vivid and strong. Associations, which do not admit any of our present perceptions as a part of the associated train, cannot but impress us, as being in some measure airy and unsubstantial, however distinct. We deeply feel, that they are part of the experiences of departed days, and which, in departing

from us, have become almost, as if they had never been. But let them partake of our present experience, of what we now feel and know to exist, and they seem to gain new strength; the remembrances are not only distinct, but what was airy and unsubstantial fades away, and they have life, and power, and form.

How often, in the wanderings of life, are we led by some apparently accidental train of thought to the recollection of the residence of our early years and of the incidents, which then occurred! The associations are interesting, but we find it difficult to make them permanent, and they are comparatively faint. But let there be connected with that train of thought the present sound of some musical instrument, which we then used to hear, and of our favourite tune, and it will be found, that the reality of the tune blends itself with the airy conceptions of the mind, and, while we kindle with an illusive rapture, the whole seems to be real. Some illustrations may tend to make these statements more clear, and to confirm them. It is related in one of the published Lectures of Dr. Bush, that an old native African was permitted by his master, a number of years since, to go from home in order to see a lion, that was conducted as a show through the state of New Jersey. He no sooner saw him, than he was so transported with joy, as to express his emotions by jumping, dancing, and loud acclamations, notwithstanding the torpid habits of mind and body, superinduced by half a century of slavery. He had known that animal, when a boy in his native country, and the sight of him suddenly revived the memory of his early enjoyments, his native land, his home, his associates, and his freedom.

There is in the same writer another interesting instance of the power of association, in which he himself had a part, and which will be given in his own words.—“During the time I passed at a country-school, in Cecil County, in Maryland, I often went on a holiday, with my schoolmates, to see an eagle’s nest, upon the summit of a dead tree in the neighbourhood of the school, during the time of the incubation of that bird. The daughter of the farmer, in

whose field this tree stood, and with whom I became acquainted, married, and settled in this city about forty ago. In our occasional interviews, we now and then of the innocent haunts and rural pleasures of our youth, and, among other things, of the eagle's nest in her father's field. A few years ago, I was called to visit this woman when she was in the lowest stage of a typhus fever. On entering her room, I caught her eye, and, with a cheerful tone of voice, said only, '*The eagle's nest.*' She took it in my hand, without being able to speak, and displayed strong emotions of pleasure in her countenance, proceeding from a sudden association of all her early domestic associations and enjoyment with the words I had uttered.\* At that time she began to recover. She is now living, and seldom fails, when we meet, to salute me with the words the 'eagle's nest.'"

From such illustrations it would seem to be sufficiently clear, that, whenever associated thoughts and emotions are connected with any present perceptions, they are peculiarly strong and vivid. They steal into all the chambers of the soul, and seemingly by some magic power impart a deep intensity to its feelings, and give to the fleeting world of memory the stability of real existence. There are two causes, why such associated feelings should possess more than ordinary strength and vividness.

(1) The particular train of thought and feeling, which is excited in the mind, continues longer than in other cases, in consequence of the greater permanency and fitness of the present objects of perception, which either suggested the train, or make a part of it. So long as the mind was permitted to remain in the sight of the aged African, so long without interruption was the series of delightful thoughts kept up within him. The bright images, which threw him into such raptures, and awoke stupidity, were not fleeting away with every breath, but remained permanent.

The sick lady of Philadelphia saw the physician, with whom she had been acquainted in the early part of her life.

\* Rush's Introductory Lectures, xi.

By the mention of the eagle's nest, he vividly recalled the scenes of those young days. But it was the presence of the person, whose observation had given rise to the train of association, which contributed chiefly to keep it so long in her thoughts. Had it occurred merely from some accidental direction of her own mind, without any present object, which had made a part of it, no doubt her sufferings under other circumstances would soon have banished it.

(2) The second cause of the increased vividness of associations, suggested by a present object of perception or combined with it, is this, viz. The reality of the thing perceived is communicated in the illusions of the moment to the thing suggested.—The trees of the desert were the hiding place of the lion, when the African saw him in early life; and now, after the lapse of so many years, he imagines, that, in the quickened eye of his mind, he beholds the forests of his native soil, because he has before him the proud and powerful animal, that crouched under their shade. And the presence of the monarch of the forest gives a reality not only to woods and deserts; but by a communication of that, which exists to that, which is merely suggested, the whole group of his early experiences of whatever kind, so far as they are recalled, virtually require a like truth and reality.

These remarks may be properly applied to explain a recent strong manifestation of feeling in a whole people. The citizens of the United States have a multitude of patriotic associations, connected with their revolutionary war. But those associations, owing to length of time, were by degrees growing dim on the minds of the aged, and made still more diminished impression on those of the young. In the years eighteen hundred twenty four and five, La Fayette, the only surviving revolutionary officer of the rank of major-general, came from France on a visit to this country to see once more the people, for whom he had fought in his youth. All classes flocked to behold him, to grasp his hand. Nothing could exceed the deep feeling, which existed from one part of the republic to the other. But it was not the individual merely, however

strongly the people were attached to him, that awoke such a happy and lofty enthusiasm. All the events and all the characters of the revolution exist to the present generation in associated states of the mind, and, as La Fayette had long formed a part in those ideal associations, when we were so fortunate, as to see him with our own eyes and touch him with our own hands, the Revolution then seemed in a new sense to be real, and all its scenes were embodied before us. All his associates in suffering and danger, all the renowned names that once fought by his side, were concentrated in himself. The reality of the living seemed to spread itself into the shadowy images of the dead; and thus the presence of this distinguished individual created not only a virtual re-existence, but a virtual presence for those revolutionary worthies, who are destined to maintain a cherished and permanent resting-place in the hearts of American citizens. It is in this deep and fond illusion, that we are, in part at least, to seek for the cause of the overwhelming emotion, which was exhibited.

In all the cases, which have been mentioned, the associated feelings were intensely powerful; a multitude of other instances, occurring indeed every day, illustrate the same idea, that they are strong and vivid in an unusual degree, when suggested by, or combined with a present object of perception. The two circumstances, which have been mentioned, seem to be the most obvious and satisfactory reasons, which can be given in explanation of the fact.

These remarks suggest a rule of some practical consequence to writers of poems, romances, and other works of imagination. They should lay the scene of their work where there are human beings; not in the fanciful region of 'Utopia,' 'Arcadia,' and 'Fairy Land.' They should describe men, women, and human nature in its various forms, and local scenery, as they are; and then we sympathize. We can at least say, that we have seen such beings as they describe, and perhaps that we have travelled in the very region of their residence, and amid its scenery. Our personal experiences will give a permanence and substantiality, and consequently a greater interest

riptions of the writer, which we might otherwise be being unnatural, or at least affected, and better other classes of beings, than ourselves.

1. Historical remarks on the doctrine of association.

ough the tendency of one idea or state of the mind to another must have ever been so obvious as to be fully observed, it required something more than the powers of discernment and classification, to hit these general principles, by which the associations are related. Aristotle, in treating of memory, speaks of these principles or laws in part, and is the first, who is known to have laid down any general rules. He says, of the relations, by which we are led in seeking after or recollecting those thoughts, which do not at once occur, are three; RESEMBLANCE, CONTRAST, and CONTIG-

There is an interesting passage in Cicero on the influence of association in the fifth book *DE FINIBUS*. His remarks illustrate particularly the results of the principle of association. They also strikingly confirm the fact in the doctrine of association, that suggested trains of thought are more vivid, when they are in some way connected with recent objects of perception.

Locke in his *Essay on the Human Understanding* has a chapter in the fourth edition on the subject of association.

This chapter, although it must be confessed is a very imperfect one, compared with what has since been written on the subject, is mentioned with commendation by Hugh Steward,\* and he thinks, it has contributed more than any thing else in Locke's writings to the subprogress of intellectual philosophy. The first edition of the *Essay on the Human Understanding* was published in 1690.

Locke, in his *INITIA DOCTRINÆ SOLIDIORIS*, published in 1705, enters into the subject somewhat particularly.

See also *Philosophical Dissertation*, Pt. II, §. 1.,—Review of the Philosophy of Locke and Leibnitz.



He begins with stating the fact of the existence of association, or that the states of the mind are in some way connected together. He then proceeds to give the general law, by which this connection or consecution of states happens, as follows;—Any thought or image in the mind has the power of suggesting the idea of some absent object. It may suggest one, that is in some respects similar to itself,—or one, of which the present is a part,—or one, which has been present together with it on some former occasion.

Mr. Hume gave much attention to this subject. In an Essay on the association of ideas, he uses the following expressions.—“Though it be too obvious to escape observation, that different ideas are connected together, I do not find, that any philosopher has attempted to enumerate or class all the principles of association; a subject, however, that seems worthy of curiosity. To me there appear to be only three principles of connection among ideas, viz. RESEMBLANCE, CONTIGUITY in time and place, and CAUSE and EFFECT.”

It is clearly implied in this statement of Mr. Hume, that he was ignorant of the passage in Aristotle above referred to. It will also be seen that he differs from that view, which has been adopted in this work in respect to the primary laws of association, in excluding CONTRAST from the number of them. He considers contrast a mixture of resemblance and causation; but such is the serious, if not insuperable difficulty, attending this proposed analysis, that it has very justly failed of a general approbation.

The doctrine of association makes a considerable figure in the *Observations on Man* of Dr. Hartley. This work was published in the beginning of 1749. Dr. Hartley does not content himself with giving the mere facts of our mental operations, which are always valuable, however difficult they may be in some cases to be explained; but undertakes also to point out the precise connection of the origin of those facts with certain previous states of the corporeal system. He supposes, that every impression of

the senses, caused by an external object, is propagated from the external body to the brain by means of vibrations in the nervous system, or rather by means of the oscillating motion of vibratory particles or vibratiuncles in the nerves. He expressly compares the vibrations or the motions backwards and forwards to the oscillations of pendulums and the tremblings of the particles of sounding bodies. When the vibration antecedent to one idea is in any degree whatever coincident with the vibration of another idea, the recurrence of either of them will have the effect to cause the repetition of the other, and of course the repetition of the idea or mental state. In this way he has proposed to account, not only for the rise or origin of those ideas, which come into the mind from things external to us, but for the existence of the great law of association. But his speculations on these points, which do not so much concern the facts themselves as their causation or physical history, have been in general regarded, as bordering too much on hypothesis to be particularly deserving of attention.

Almost all recent writers on intellectual philosophy have entered more or less into the subject of association. This was to be expected from its acknowledged importance, whether we consider its practical applications, or its connection with the other mental susceptibilities. The subject is particularly examined, among other writers of merit, by Stewart, and in the lectures of Brown. To the latter, it would appear, that we are exclusively indebted for the investigation and analysis of the secondary laws of association.——See Stewart's Elements, Vol. I, ch. v ; Brown's Philosophy of the Human Mind, Lects. xxxv—xl.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEENTH.

### CASUAL CONNECTIONS OF THOUGHT.

§. 205. Association sometimes misleads our judgments.

**T**HERE are some cases, where the power of association so misleads us, that we cannot easily form a correct judgment of the true nature of things. Every object of thought, in order to be fully understood, ought to be as much in our power, that we may examine it separately from all other objects. Whenever, therefore, it happens from any circumstances, that the power of association combines one object of thought with another, that the object cannot readily be looked at and examined by itself it so far has the effect to perplex and hinder correct judgment. It will be found, when we look into our minds, that there exist a few associations or combinations of thought of this kind, which are obstinate and almost invincible; and there are very many of a less degree of strength, but which have a considerable effect in disturbing the just exercise of the intellect, and require much care in their detection and eradication. The latter class will be examined at some length in the chapter on PREJUDICES;—some prominent instances of the former class will be considered here, and, for the want of a better phraseology, we shall arrange them together under the head of CASUAL CONNECTIONS OF THOUGHT.

Of these a number of instances deserve a special attention. To explain the origin and to correct the erroneous tendencies of all such connections of thought, al-

though the number of such as we have now in view cannot be large, would occupy us too long. The examination of a few somewhat striking instances will not only throw light on the philosophy of the mind in general, but will be of some practical benefit.

§. 206. Connection of our ideas of extension and time.

EXTENSION is reckoned among the simple ideas, although it is derived from more than one sense; it is, therefore, difficult to define it so as to make it more clear, than it has already become by each one's experience. It perhaps approaches the nearest to a definition or rather description of it, to say, that it is the distance between the parts of the same object, where in the intermediate parts there is a continuity of the same substance.—We get the idea of TIME, which comes under the class of SIMPLE MODES, by considering any part of duration, as set or marked off by periodical measures, such as hours, days, or years. It is well known, whatever may be the cause of it, that people are generally in the habit of considering time, as a sort of modification of space or extension. This observation may not appear perfectly obvious at first. But the expressions, which we apply to intervals of duration, are an evidence of its truth.

We say *before* such a time or *after* such a time, the same as before or after any material object;—we speak of a *long* or a *short* time with no more hesitation than of a long or short distance, of a long or short bridge, or railway, or any other object of extension. We utter ourselves precisely in the same way we should do, if we were certain of having detected some real analogy between the two, between length and shortness in material substances, and what are called length and shortness in time. But it is not too much to say, that there is no such analogy, no such similitude; nor is it worth while to anticipate, that we shall ever be able to detect such analogy or similitude, till we can apply the measures of feet, ells, roods, &c., to hours, and days, and weeks. How then can it be accounted for, that we apply terms nearly in the same way,

as if this were the case, and, as if such measure could be made?

The strong association of these ideas has most probably arisen in this manner, viz., from our constantly suring one of these quantities by the other. It is a common method to measure time by motion, and it is measured by extension. In an hour the hand of a clock moves over a certain space; in two hours over double space, and so on.—No doubt it is convenient to use the terms “long” and “short,” “before” and “after,” and others similar, to time. We could not well dispense with them. But it ought to be remembered, if we would have right notions of things, that the application of those expressions has arisen from the mode in which we measure time, and that time and space or that modification of space which we call extension are essentially distinct in their nature.

§. 207. Of high and low notes in music.

We speak of high and low in reference to notes in music, the same as of the high or low position of material bodies. There is supposed to be some analogy between the relation, which the notes in the scale of music bear to each other, and the relation of superiority and inferiority in the position of bodies of matter. But it is impossible to prove the existence of such analogy, however generally it may have been supposed; and the supposition itself of its existence has no doubt arisen from a casual association of ideas, or, in the expressions placed at the head of this chapter, in a casual connection of thought. A proof of this association of ideas being purely accidental is that an association, the very reverse of this, was once prevalent.—It is remarked in the preface to Gregor's edition of Euclid's works, that the more ancient Greek writers considered the grave sounds as high, and the acute ones as low. The present mode of speaking on the subject is of more recent origin; but at what time and in what way it was introduced cannot be asserted with confidence. In the preface just referred to, it is, however

served, that the ancient Greek custom of looking upon grave sounds as high and the acute as low, precisely reverse of what is now common, continued down until the time of Boethius. It has been conjectured with some genuity, that this connection or association of thought among the Greeks and Romans, for it was equally prevalent among both, might have been owing to the construction of their musical instruments. The string, which sounded the grave or what we call the low tone, it has been supposed, was placed highest, and that, which gave a shrill or acute, had the lowest place. If this conjecture could be ascertained to be well founded, it would strikingly show, from what very slight causes strong and permanent associations often arise. It is hardly necessary to observe, that it is important to examine the origin and progress of such associations, in order that we may correct those erroneous and illusive notions, which will be apt to be built upon them.

§. 208. Connection of the ideas of extension and colour.

There is no necessary connection between colour, as the term is commonly employed by philosophers, and extension. The word COLOUR properly denotes a sensation in the mind; the word EXTENSION, the quality of an external material object. There is, therefore, no more natural connection and no more analogy between the two, than there is between pain and solidity. And yet it so happens that we never have the sensation or idea of colour without at the same time associating extension with it; we find them, however different they may be in their nature, inseparable in our thoughts. This strong association is formed in consequence of our always perceiving extension at the same time, in which the sensation of colour is excited in the mind. The perception of the one, and the sensation of the other have been so long simultaneous, that we have been gradually drawn into the belief, that, on the one hand, all colour has extension, and, on the other, all extension has colour. But what we call colour being merely a state of the mind, it is not possible, that it should

with propriety be predicated of any external material substances. Nor is it less evident, if colour be merely a sensation or state of the mind, that matter can exist and does exist without it.

But what has been said will not satisfy all the queries, which may be started on this point, unless we remark also on the ambiguity in the word *COLOUR*. The view, which has been taken of the connection between colour and extension, is founded on the supposition, that colour denotes a sensation of the mind and that merely. It seems to be supposed by some writers, that the word colour has two meanings, and that it is thus generally understood ;—(1) It denotes that disposition or arrangement in the particles of matter, which not only causes the rays of light to be reflected, but to be reflected in different ways ;—(2) It denotes that mental sensation, which follows, when the rays have reached the retina of the eye. When people use the term with this diversity of signification they can say with truth, that external bodies have colour, and also that colour is a sensation of the mind. It may be said also in the first sense of the term, which has been mentioned, that colour has extension, because particles of matter have extension. But it is by no means evident, that people generally make this distinction, although some may. There is great reason to think, that they commonly mean by the term the *appearance* of colour or the sensation in the mind ; and they no doubt do in general regard this appearance or sensation, as belonging to external objects, as being in some sense a part of those objects, and as having extension. How erroneous this supposition is, has already appeared!

§. 209. Whether there be heat in fire, &c.

The questions, Whether there be heat in fire, coldness in snow, sweetness in sugar, and the like, seem well suited to the inquisitive and nicely discriminating spirit of the Scholastic ages. Whether bodies have colour, a point of inquiry in the last section, is another question of essentially the same character. Although well suited to exercising the ingenuity of the Schools, they are far from being with

at some importance in the more practical philosophy of later times. If these questions concern merely the matter of fact, if the inquiry be, What do people think on these points? It admits of different answers. But this is of less consequence to be known, than to know what is the true view of this subject? The following, we think, is the view, which should be taken. If by heat, cold, and taste in bodies, we merely mean, that there is this or that disposition or motion in the particles, then it must clearly be granted, that fire is hot, that snow is cold, and sugar is sweet. But if by heat is understood what one feels on the application of fire to the limbs, or if by sweetness is understood the sensation of taste, when a sapid body is applied to the tongue, &c., then fire has no heat, sugar no sweetness, and snow is not cold. These states of the mind can never be transformed into any thing material and external. The heat or the cold which I feel, and the different kinds of tastes are sensations in the soul, and nothing else.

§. 210. Whether there be meaning in words?

We say in our common discourse, that there is meaning in words, that there is meaning in the printed page of an author; and the language is perhaps sufficiently correct for those occasions, on which it is ordinarily employed. We do not deem it necessary to object to the common mode of speaking in this particular instance, nor to undertake to propose any thing better. But there is here an association of ideas, similar, both in its nature and its effects, to that existing between extension and colour already remarked upon.

When objects external to us are presented to the sense of sight, there is immediately the sensation of some colour. In this sensation we have been so long in the habit of referring to the external object, that we speak and act, as if the colour were truly in that object and not in ourselves; the language of D'Alembert, as if the sensation were imported out of the mind, and spread over the material substance. And it is not until we take some time to re-



flect, and until we institute a careful examination, that become satisfied of our error.

In the same way when we look upon the page of an author we say it has meaning, or that it is full of thought; whereas in truth, in consequence of a long continued obstinate association, of which we are hardly sensible to ourselves, we transport the meaning or thought out of ourselves and spread it upon that page. The thought meaning is in ourselves, but is placed by us, through means of a casual but very strong association, in the written marks, which are before us. All the power, which words have, results from convention, or, what is the same thing, exists in consequence of certain intellectual habits formed in reference to those words. It is these habits formed in reference to them, it is this mental correspondence, which gives these characters all their value; without the mind, which answers to and which interprets them, they could be considered as nothing more than a few black strokes drawn upon white paper, and essentially differing in nothing from the zigzag and unmeaning delineations of a schoolboy on the sand. As all the beautiful variety of colours do not and cannot have an existence without the mind, which has sensations of them or perceives them, so words are useless, are unmeaning, are meaningless without the interpretations of an intellect, that has been trained up so as to correspond to them. Otherwise there would be meaning in the unknown inscriptions on bricks brought from Babylon; there would be meaning in those hieroglyphical figures on the monuments of Egypt which have hitherto eluded the efforts to interpret them; they would not stare upon us with the unintelligent vacancy of an idiot. They are now without meaning, without life and intelligence, for this reason and this only, that the minds, which once corresponded to them, and which gave them life and intelligence, are no more. By association, therefore, we refer the meaning to the written characters or words, when in truth it is in the mind, and there alone.

## §. 211. Benefit of examining such connections of thought:

It is of great importance to us to be able to separate ideas, which our situation and habits may have intimately combined together. To a person, who has this power in a considerable degree, we readily give the credit of possessing a clear and discriminating judgment. And this mental characteristic is of great consequence not only in pursuing the study of intellectual philosophy, but in the conduct of life. It is in particular directly subservient to the power of reasoning, since all processes of reasoning are made up of successive propositions, the comparison of which implies the exercise of judgment. The associations of thought, which have been mentioned in this chapter, are so intimate or rather almost indissoluble, that they try and discipline the mind in this respect,—they teach it to discriminate. They are worthy to be examined, therefore, and to be understood, not only for the immediate pleasure, which they afford in the discovery of our errors; but also because they have the effect of training up one's powers to some good purpose. Let a person be accustomed to making such discriminations as are implied in fully understanding the instances in this chapter, and he acquires a readiness, which is not easily outwitted; he trains himself to such a quickness of perception in finding out what truly belongs to an object and what does not, as will not allow him to be imposed upon by that confusion of ideas, which in so many cases disorders the judgments of the multitude.

## §. 212. Power of the will over mental associations.

In view of what has been said in this and the preceding chapters, the inquiry naturally arises, What is the degree of influence, which we are able to exercise by mere will or volition over associated trains of thought? The answer to be given to this inquiry is, that we have no direct influence or power over them;—there is a constant train of ideas, but their succession, their coming and departing depends on causes beyond our immediate voluntary control. The truth of the general statement, that we cannot

produce or call up an idea by a mere direct act of the will, and that, consequently, trains of ideas are not directly under its control, cannot but appear quite evident on a little reflection. We never can will the existence of any thing without knowing what it is which we will or choose. This requires no further proof than is contained in the proposition itself. Therefore, the expressions, to will to have a certain thought or train of thought, clearly imply the present existence of that thought or train; and, consequently, there can be no such thing as calling up and directing our thoughts by immediate volition.

To this view of want of direct voluntary power over our associated ideas and to the argument in support of it, those mental efforts, which we term recollection or intentional memory, have been brought up as an answer. In cases of intentional memory it will be said, an object or event is remembered, or, in other words, an idea or train of ideas is called up, by mere volition or choice. To this objection we make this reply. It is evident, before we attempt or make a formal effort to remember the particular circumstances of an event, that the event itself in general must have been the object of our attention. There is some particular thing in all cases of intentional remembrance, which we wish to call to mind, although we are totally unable to state what it is; but we know, that it is somehow connected with some general event, which we already have in memory. Now by revolving in mind the great facts or outlines of that event, it so happens, that the particular circumstance, which we were in search of, is called up. But certainly no one can say that this is done by a direct volition;—so far from it, that nothing more is wanted to explain it, than the common principles of association. This statement is illustrated, whenever, in reciting an extract which we had committed to memory, we are at a loss for the beginning of a particular sentence. In such a case we naturally repeat a number of times the concluding words of the preceding sentence, and very soon we recall the sentence, which was lost: not, however, by direct volition, but by association.

1. Associations controlled by an indirect voluntary power.

It would not be understood to say, that the will has no influence whatever over our trains of thought; influence is very considerable, although it is not, as we have seen, immediate and direct.—(1) We have, in the first place, the power of checking or delaying the succession of ideas. This power is always found to exist, in the direction of the mind towards a particular subject attended with a feeling of desire or interest. We are, indeed, enabled by our power in this respect to call up or to banish any one or any number of our thoughts. But the consequence is, a variety of trains of thought are suggested, which would not have been suggested, had it not been for the circumstance of the original train being delayed. Thus, in the case of our mental associations, the name of Sir Isaac Newton occurs;—we experience a strong emotion of interest; aided by this interest, we check the current of our thoughts at that name, and we feel and are conscious, that we have within us the ability to do so. While we dwell upon it, a variety of series of ideas occurs. At one moment, we think of eminent mathematicians and philosophers, for he himself was one; at another, we think of his contemporaries, who were his particular friends, for their rank in science, because they lived at the same time; a moment after, our minds dwell upon some of the great incidents in his life or some marked features in his moral or intellectual character;—and again, we may be led to think, almost in the same instant, of some proposition or demonstration, which had once exercised his genius and skill. In consequence of delaying a few moments on the name or rather on the general idea of Newton, these different trains of thought are presented; we can evidently fix our minds upon one of these trains, if we choose, or have a desire to, and dismiss the others. This is one way, in which by choice or volition we are able to exercise a considerable indirect power over our associations.

We acquire, in the second place, great power over

our associations by HABIT; and, as no man forms such habit without willing or choosing to form it, we have here another instance of the indirect power of volition. By the term, habit, when it is applied to our mental operations, we mean that facility or readiness, which they acquire by being frequently repeated. (See §. 117.) The consequence of repetition or frequent practice is, that certain associations are soon very much strengthened, or that a facility in them is acquired. It is a well known fact, that almost any person may become a punster or rhymers by taking the pains to form a habit, that is, by increasing the facility of certain associations by frequent repetition. By punning we understand the power of readily summoning up, on a particular occasion, a number of words different from each other in meaning, but resembling each other, more or less, in sound.—That facility of association, which is acquired by frequent repetition and which is expressed by the word HABIT, is the great secret of fluency in extemporaneous speaking. The extemporaneous speaker must, indeed, have ideas; no modification of association whatever can supply the place of them. But his ability to arrange them in some suitable order and to express them in words without previous care and effort, is the result, in a great measure, of habits of association.—See Stewart's Elements, Vol. I. CH. V. PT. 2.; Historical Dissertation, Pt. I. §. II. CH. 2.; Brown's Lectures, XLI, XLII, XLIX.

## CHAPTER NINETEENTH.

### OF INTELLECTUAL HABITS.

#### §. 214. Of the nature and extent of habits in general.

**T**HE closing remarks in the last chapter naturally introduce us to the more particular consideration of intellectual habits. The definition already given more than once, (§. §. 117, 213,) is, that Habit is a facility or readiness, resulting from what is usually termed practice; that is, from frequency of repetition. The fact, that the facility, implied in HABIT, is owing to mere repetition or practice, we learn from experience. And as it has hitherto been found impracticable to resolve it into any principles more elementary, and as consequently we know nothing more than the mere fact, it may at present be regarded, as an ultimate law in our constitution.—The application of the term HABITS, is very extensive. We apply it to the dexterity of workmen in the different manual arts, to the rapidity of the accountant, to the coup-d'oeil of the military engineer, to the tact and fluency of the extemporaneous speaker, and in various other instances.

In the mechanical arts, and in all cases where there is corporal as well as mental effort, the effect of practice will be found to extend both to the mind and the body. Not only the acts of the mind are quickened and strengthened, but all those muscles, which are at such times employed, become stronger and more obedient to the will. Indeed the submission of the muscular effort to the volition is oftentimes rendered so prompt by habit, that we

are unable distinctly to recollect any exercise of volition, previous to the active or muscular exertion.—But it is the object of this chapter to limit its considerations to such habits, as concern our intellectual part.

§ 215. Habits of perception or external observation.

Perception, or that notice, which the mind takes of external objects, is susceptible of being greatly controlled by Habit. The readiness, with which we seize upon whatever is peculiar and striking in such objects, will depend in no small measure upon it.—We see evidence of this in cases of this kind ; When a person leaves his native land for the purpose of travel abroad, it can hardly fail to be the natural consequence, that he will notice objects with great care, such as the general face of the country, natural scenery, and buildings, together with whatever is worthy of observation in the manners, customs, and laws of the inhabitants. Having in this way formed the habit of observation abroad, he is found to retain it on his return home ; and immediately notices many things among his own people, which had hitherto escaped his remark.

We often find proof of the existence of mental habits, which affect the readiness of external observation, in men of different callings or professions. A skilful printer will at once notice every thing of excellence or of deficiency in the mechanical execution of a printed work. A farmer of a tolerable degree of experience and discernment requires but a slight inspection, in order to give an opinion on the qualities of a piece of land, and its suitability for a settlement.—An experienced painter at once detects a mannerism in colouring, combinations and contrasts of light and shade, and peculiarities of form, proportion, or position, which infallibly escape a person of more limited experience.—The almost intuitive vision of the skilful engineer is beyond doubt in most cases merely a habit. He has so often fixed his eye upon those features in a country, which have a relation to his peculiar calling, that he instantly detects the bearing

military position ; its susceptibility of defence, its fa-  
ces of approach and retreat, &c.

i. Of habits of external perception in connection with the im-  
provement of the other senses when one is lost.

There is another well known and interesting fact, il-  
lustrative of the views in the preceding section. When  
one of our senses is by some means lost, there is an im-  
provement of the others ; when a person loses his sight,  
there is an increased sensibility of the touch. We can  
suppose, (as already intimated at §. 54,) that there is  
a change in the physical constitution, which is the  
cause of the improvement of the remaining senses. Such  
a supposition is unnecessary, and, as the fact can be ex-  
plained without it, is unphilosophical. Another explana-  
tion is, therefore, to be preferred.—When all the sen-  
ses remain, and are in full exercise, there are a multitude  
of slight suggestions from them, which do not arrest our  
attention, because they are not of any immediate and urgent  
practical value. They at most receive but slight atten-  
tion, and if noticed at all, are not remembered. But  
when one or more of the senses is gone, those slight sug-  
gestions at once assume an increased importance. They  
become necessary to one's enjoyment, and perhaps exist-  
ence. The mind, therefore, is under a sort of necessity  
of paying upon and marking a variety of evanescent im-  
pressions from the senses, which it formerly neglected.  
It no longer merely observes, but examines them, and puts them  
to a far less practical use than many more obvious sen-  
ses. So that without admitting the notion of a physi-  
cal improvement of the senses, when one is lost, the truth  
is, that our powers of external observation are  
strengthened by practice ; the mind observes and retains  
slight suggestions of the remaining senses, more than  
it formerly did.—The views of this and the preceding  
section will apply to conceptions, or those states of mind,  
which exist in the absence of their appropriate objects.  
It is unnecessary to delay upon this, as it has be-  
fore been proved and illustrated at §. 117.



## §. 217. Of habits in connection with association.

The power of association is likewise susceptible of being controlled by habit. This has been already implied in the statement of the third secondary law of association, which is as follows ; The parts of any mental train are the more readily suggested in proportion as they have been *the more frequently renewed*.—Instances of the effect of habit in connection with association have been alluded to in a former section. Thus, if a person make it a practice to recall words, which have a similar sound, this particular form of association is so strengthened, that in the end it is by no means difficult to secure the recurrence of such words.—If a public speaker have fixed in his mind certain permanent principles, which are to guide him in the division, and subdivision of his discourse, he immediately applies them to every subject of debate. By means of the habit, which he has formed, he is not only enabled to resolve a subject into suitable parts, but to pass without hesitation or danger of mistake from one part of it to another.

“ I sometimes amuse myself, (says Dr. Priestley,) in playing on a flute, which I did not learn very early, so that I have a perfect remembrance that I exerted an oppress voluntary power every time that I covered any particular hole with my finger. But though I am no great proficient on the instrument, there are some tunes which now very often play without ever attending to my finger or explicitly to the tune. I have even played in concert, and, as I was informed, perfectly in tune, when I have been so absent, that, excepting at the beginning, I did not recollect that I had been playing at all.”—Here it is evident, there was at first merely a simple association, between a certain position of the finger and the emission of a certain sound, which was indicated by the musical notes. The union thus formed was both weak, and slow and lingering in its results. It gradually acquired strength and facility by repetition ; that is, a HABIT of association was formed.

## §. 218. Of habits of volition or willing.

There are instances, where volition appears to be affected by habit.—In every act of volition or willing is understood to be a choice or preference. Such necessarily implies a comparison of certain things, in accordance to their suitableness or unsuitableness, their desirability or their want of it. The act of volition will be more or less according to the time, taken up in this comparison. But as comparison implies association, it clearly follows, that, provided there be an increased quickness or habit of association, there will also be an increased quickness in the act of willing; that is, a habit of willing will be formed.—Hence many of those instances, (for instance, the learning to play on a flute or oboe,) which illustrate an increased quickness of volition, may also be referred to, in illustration of habit.

Among other instances, having a relation to the present, the case of the equilibrist, who balances a rod on his finger, or performs some such feat, may be mentioned. The feat of balancing the rod demands the constant attention of the eye. The part of the body, which supports the object, is never wholly at rest; for if it were, the rod would no more stand upon it, than it would retain its position, if placed upright on a table. The equilibrist, therefore, watches every inclination of the object from the position, so as to counteract that inclination by a contrary movement. This watchfulness involves a particular direction of the eye; and this direction of the eye necessarily implies a preceding volition, by which its motion is controlled. Sometimes not only a single rod is balanced in this way by the equilibrist, but two or three on different parts of his body. When attempts of this last kind are made, the performer may be aided in obtaining knowledge of the particular inclination of the balanced object from the sense of touch as well as of sight. But there must be an increase of quickness of volition, corresponding to the number of objects, which are balanced. There must be acts of volition (1) to control the

movements of the eye, and, (2) to control the muscular movements, which are designed to counteract the tendencies of the balanced objects, whether those tendencies are learnt from the sight or some other sense, it is evident, that these acts must be exceedingly rapid. As this rapidity or facility of volition is never found in a performer in his first essays, but is acquired by degrees, we may well conclude, that there are HABITS of volition, as well as of other mental acts and laws.

We have a similar illustration of quickened volitions in the performances at the circus. The performer vaults upon a horse, when at full speed; he rises on the saddle; he stands upon one foot; and, in this situation, while his horse is in the most rapid movement, performs a variety of feats, every one of which requires from the mind a multitude of distinct acts of association and of the will.

#### §. 219. Habits of will or volition further considered.

But it is not necessary to refer exclusively to performances of the nature above described, in order to explain the high degree of facility, to which the power of willing may be brought. Perhaps the mere fact of walking, of moving from place to place, which is common to all, places the subject in an equally clear light.

Walking is performed, like the more striking feats of circus actors, equilibrists, and rope-dancers, by means of a series of muscular contractions. In order, therefore, to produce certain movements of the body in walking, it is necessary, that certain muscles should be contracted, and not others; and that they should be contracted to a definite extent, neither more nor less. Although the muscles, from our very constitution, readily obey the power of willing, yet this power, when aiming to secure the particular object in question, is at first greatly hindered and perplexed, as we see in children. They control, in beginning to walk, the wrong muscles, or control them too little or too much. But after repeated attempts, having corrected their mistakes, and having formed a HABIT, they readily govern the requisite movements, so that in walking we are almost

unconscious, in subsequent life, of any exertion of the will.—In this case, as in others, the powers of the will and of association are both quickened at the same time, the acts of the will being generally preceded by other mental acts, which involve association.

§. 220. Habits of reasoning and imagination.

Views, similar to those already advanced, will apply to the powers of reasoning and of imagination.—In moral reasoning, it is often necessary to divide a subject into parts, and whenever this is the case, to give to them a suitable arrangement. The effect of practice in this respect has been before noticed. On entering still more minutely into the nature of reasoning, we discover that the mind compares together various propositions, and ascertains their agreement or disagreement. And here also a readiness of comparison is easily detected in those, who have been in the practice of reasoning, which is not found in others.—The same is true in the imagination. Place in the hands of a child the *Arabian Nights* and the no less wonderful tales of the *Ædda*; let reading of this character occupy the days of his youth, before the eagerness of curiosity has ceased, and certain habits of imagination will be inevitably formed. That creative power, which is appropriate to it, will be greatly strengthened; and to his latest days, it will be a strange thing, if he do not indulge in intellectual visions; calling islands from the deep, erecting castles, and doing whatever else forms the theme of the wildest stories of the Scandinavian and Arabian mythology.

§. 221. Of habits in connection with the emotions and passions.

The existence of the same great law of our nature may be detected also in the operation of the emotions and passions.—An unfavourable suspicion is indulged by one individual in respect to another; this suspicion, instead of being effectually examined and checked, is permitted to remain; it often arises, and is found to gain strength from mere repetition, until it is converted, by the accession of

strength it has received, into positive dislike, and sometimes into hatred.—The feeling of benevolence is subjected to the same general law. If the feeling be indulged, it will gain strength; but if it be subjected to a continued system of repression, it becomes so broken down and weakened, that at last objects of suffering entirely cease to affect us. So marked will be the results of this course, that scenes of widespread misery, such as the ravages of famine, war, and pestilence, will fail to operate upon hearts, which, in the youth of their feelings, would have been affected with the least aggravated forms of wretchedness.

It is happy for us in the inquiries of intellectual philosophy, if we can confirm what inquisitive men have been able to find out in their closets by an insight into the mental history of common life; by a reference to the experiences, habits, and prejudices of those, who make no pretensions to skill in books. Nor are confirmations of the principles of this science less valuable, when they are given by scholars, whose calling it is to write upon other subjects, but who at times let fall an incidental testimony in respect to them. Thus in a work of the late President Adams is the following passage, which confirms the view of this section; "The passions are all unlimited; nature has left them so; if they could be bounded, they would be extinct; and there is no doubt they are of indispensable importance in the present system. They certainly increase too, by exercise, like the body; the love of glory grows faster than the heap of acquisition; the love of praise increases by every gratification, till it stings like aadder and bites like a serpent, till the man is miserable every moment he does not snuff the incense; ambition strengthens at every advance, and at last takes possession of the whole soul so absolutely, that the man sees nothing in the world of importance to others, or himself, but in object."\*

\* Adam's Defence of the Constitutions of the United States, I. p. 129.—Philad. Ed.

## §. 222. Of the intellectual habits of men in active life.

The subject under consideration admits of being placed in other lights, and of being confirmed by numerous facts from sources not hitherto mentioned. It is in this portion of our mental history, we are to seek for an explanation of that sagacity, which is often shown by Savages in their hunting and military expeditions, and on other occasions. It is here also we are able to give an account of those striking powers of observation, which are observed in the Deaf and Dumb. But without proposing to pursue the subject here to its full extent, something remains to be said of the habits of men, who, without having received a perfect education, are much occupied in the business of common and active life.

The mental operations of men in active life, are often very rapid, the conclusions, at which they arrive on subjects somewhat complicated, are generally correct, but they frequently find themselves unable to state clearly the process of reasoning, by which they arrived at the conclusion. Oliver Cromwell, the English Protector, is said to have been a person, to whom this statement would well apply. Rarely any man has had a clearer insight into events, but when he attempted to explain himself, he was confused and obscure. If we were to give his intellectual character in a single sentence, it would be but just to say, that Cromwell was a man of argument, but no speaker. His mind readily insinuated itself into the intricacies of a subject, and while he could assert with confidence, that he had arrived at a satisfactory conclusion, he could not readily describe either the direction he had taken or the involutions of the journey. This character of the Protector will apply to multitudes of men in active life, though undoubtedly for the most part in a less degree. Their distinguishing traits are two,—an ability to examine with great quickness all the parts of an intricate subject, and an equal want of ability in stating this process to others.

Concerning the first of these characteristics, it is sufficient to say, that the great readiness, which they exhibit,

is a habit, which they have been compelled to form by the circumstances, in which they have been placed. In a thousand emergencies they have been obliged to act with quickness, and at the same time with caution; in other words, to examine subjects, and to do it with expedition. In this way the habit spoken of has been formed, viz., of exceeding readiness in all their mental acts.—The other prominent mental trait in men in active life arises from this great quickness of intellectual operation, which they are capable of putting forth. The minute circumstances, which are examined, previous to a judgment on all subjects of difficulty, are passed in review with such rapidity, and made in so very small a degree or rather for so short a time the objects of separate attention, that they vanish and are forgotten. Hence these persons, although the conclusion to which they have come be satisfactory, are unable to state to others all the subordinate steps in the argument. Every thing has once been fairly and distinctly before their own minds, although with that great rapidity, which is always implied in a HABIT; but their argument, as stated in words, owing to their inability to arrange and embody all the evanescent processes of thought, appears to others defective and confused.—And in truth it is a known fact, that mere men of business have for the most part no small repugnance to stating their views to public. They regard it as a task of much difficulty, and undoubtedly it is to persons of such intellectual habits. When obliged to do it, their only resort is to prepare themselves in private, to examine again and again their thoughts, to throw them into words and sentences, and to fix the verbal propositions with as much exactness as possible in the memory; otherwise they fail to do justice either to themselves or their subject.—Stewart's Elements, Vol. I. CH. V. PT. 2.; Essays, IV, PT. II.; Priestley's Examination, SECT. VIII.; Locke's Essay, BK. II, CH. 33; Brown's Lect. XLIII. &c.

## CHAPTER TWENTIETH.

### OF ATTENTION.

#### §. 223. Of the general nature of attention.

WITHOUT considering it necessary to speak of attention as a separate intellectual power or faculty, as some are inclined to do, it seems to be sufficient to say, that ATTENTION expresses the state of the mind, when it is directed, for some time, whether longer or shorter, to any object of sense or intellect, exclusive of other objects. When we say, that any external object, or any sub-  
ject of thought, which is purely internal, receives attention, it seems to be the fact, as far as we are able to determine, that the mind is occupied with the subject of its attention, whatever it is, for a certain period, and that all other things are, for the time being, shut out. In other words, the grasp, which the mind fixes upon the object of attention, is an undivided, an unbroken one.

It is natural to inquire, How this differs from the direction of the mind to a subject in any other case? Since, in all instances, the mind, for the time being, is in one direction only; it always embraces one subject or part of a subject, exclusive of others.—The answer to be given to the inquiry is, that in ATTENTION the direction of the mind to a particular subject, or, (what is the same thing,) to a particular nuance in a particular state or series of states, is attended with a feeling of preference, desire, or interest. This feeling of desire is the cause of that continuance, so that in all cases of attention, the act of the



mind is a complex one, involving two things, (1,) The mere thought or series of thoughts, (2,) The accompanying emotion of interest, which prevents that continual change in the thought, which would otherwise happen.

§. 224. Of different degrees of attention.

In agreement with this view of the subject, we often speak of attention as great or small, as existing in a very high or a very slight degree. When the view of the mind is only momentary, and is unaccompanied, as it generally is at such times, with any force of emotion; then the attention is said to be slight. When it bends itself upon a thought or series of thoughts with earnestness, and for a considerable length of time, and refuses to attend to any thing else; then the attention is said to be intense.

We commonly judge at first of the degree of attention to a subject from the length of time, during which the mind is occupied with it. But when we look a little further, it will be found, that the time will generally depend upon the strength and permanency of the attendant emotion of interest. And hence both the time and the degree of feeling are to be regarded.

Of instances of people, who are able to give but slight attention to any subject of thought, who cannot bring their minds to it with steadiness and power, we every where find multitudes; and there are some instances, where this ability has been possessed in such a high degree as to be worthy of notice. There have been mathematicians, who could investigate the most complicated problems amid every variety and character of disturbance. It was said of Julius Cæsar, that, while writing a despatch, he could at the same time dictate four others to his secretaries, and if he did not write himself could dictate seven letters at once. The chess-player Philidor could direct three games of chess at the same time, of one of which only he required ocular inspection, the moves of the other two being announced to him by an assistant. The moves of the chess-men formed the subject, about which his thoughts were employed, and such was the intensity of interest, that

the mind found no difficulty in dwelling upon it to the exclusion of other subjects, and for a considerable length of time.

§. 225. Dependence of memory on attention.

There seems to be no fact in mental philosophy more clearly established than this, that memory depends on attention; that is, where attention is very slight, remembrance is weak, and where attention is intense, remembrance continues longer. The following statement of Mr. Hobbes, in his political treatise of the *Leviathan*, will tend to illustrate this fact.—He says, he was once in company, where the conversation turned on the English civil war. A person abruptly asked, in the course of the conversation, What was the value of a Roman denarius? Such a question, so remote from the general direction of the conversation, had the appearance not only of great abruptness, but of impertinence. Mr. Hobbes says, that, on a little reflection, he was able to trace the train of thought, which suggested the question. The original subject of discourse naturally introduced the history of king Charles; the king naturally suggested the treachery of those, who surrendered him up to his enemies; the treachery of these persons readily introduced to the mind the treachery of Judas Iscariot; the conduct of Judas was associated with the thirty pieces of silver, and as the Romans occupied Judea at the time of the crucifixion of the Saviour, the pieces of silver were associated with the Roman denarii. All these trains of thought passed through the mind of the person, who asked the question, in a twinkling; and with good reason Mr. Stewart, in remarking on this anecdote, thinks it not improbable, that he could himself have been unable readily to state the train of ideas, which led to the unexpected inquiry.—Every one is able to detect analogous facts in his own mental experiences. We unexpectedly find ourselves reflecting on a subject, to which we must have been conducted by a concatenation of thought. But the preceding series, which conducted to the present subject of our medi-

tations, occupied our attention for so short a time, that no foundation was laid for the memory, and it has irretrievably vanished.

§. 226. Further illustrations of the dependence of memory on attention.

There are other facts perhaps of a still more obvious and satisfactory nature, which confirm the principle under consideration.—(1) Let a person be much engaged in conversation or occupied with any very interesting speculation, and the clock will strike in the room where he is, apparently without his having any knowledge of it. He hears the clock strike as much as at any other time, but, not attending to the perception of sound and having his thoughts directed another way, he immediately forgets.—(2) In the course of a single day persons, who are in the habit of winking, will close their eyelids perhaps thousands of times, and as often as they close them, will place themselves in utter darkness. Undoubtedly they are conscious at the time both of closing their eyelids and of being in the dark, but as their attention is chiefly taken up with other things, they have entirely forgotten it.—(3) Whenever we read a book, we do not observe the words merely as a whole, but every letter of which they are made up, and even the minute parts of these letters. But it is merely a glance; it does not for any length of time occupy our attention; we immediately forget, and with great difficulty persuade ourselves, that we have truly perceived the letters of the word. The fact, that every letter is in ordinary cases observed by us, may be proved by leaving out a letter of the word, or by substituting others of a similar form. We readily in reading detect such omissions or substitutions.—(4) An expert accountant can sum up, almost with a single glance of the eye, a long column of figures. The operation is performed almost instantaneously, and yet he ascertains the sum of the whole with unerring certainty. It is impossible, that he should learn the sum without noticing every figure in the whole column, and without allowing each its proper worth;

it the attention to them was so very slight, that he is able to remember this distinct notice.

Many facts of this kind evidently show, as we think, at memory depends upon attention or rather upon a continuance of attention and varies with that continuance.

227. Relation of this principle to the views of Reid and Hartley in respect to muscular habits.

In connection with what has been said on the principle, that the power of remembrance will vary with the degree of attention, we are naturally led to remark on the views of Reid and Hartley on the subject of certain habits.

It seems to be the opinion of these writers, that bodily or muscular habits operate in many cases without will or intention on the part of the person, who has formed them; and that as they are without any attendant thought, without any preceding mental operation, such bodily acts are to be considered as purely mechanical or automatic. They endeavour to explain and confirm their views by the instance of a person, learning to play on the harpsichord. When a person first begins to learn, it is admitted by all, that there is an express act of volition, preceding every motion of the fingers. By degrees the motions appear to cling to each other mechanically; we are no longer conscious of volitions, preceding and governing them. In other words, there is nothing left but the motions; there is no act of the mind; the performance, admirable as it is, has the same merit with that of a machine.

§. 228. Objections to the views of Reid and Hartley.

In replying to these views, it may be safely admitted, that, in playing the harpsichord and some other musical instruments, we have not always a distinct remembrance of volitions, and consequently the muscular effort has sometimes the appearance of being independent of the mind. But this mere appearance is not sufficient to command our assent to the doctrine advanced by these writers, until the four following objections be set aside.

(1) The supposition, that the acts in question are automatic, is unnecessary. In the preceding chapter it was

shown, there may be HABITS of volition. This implies, that they may be very rapid, and arrest our attention but for a moment. And we have shown the consequence of this slight attention to be, that they may exist without being remembered. These facts we regard as sufficient to explain the mere appearance, which is admitted to exist, but which Reid and Hartley attempt to explain by an utter denial of the putting forth of volitions at all.

(2) The most rapid performers are able, when they please, to play so slowly, that they can distinctly observe every act of the will in the various movements of the fingers. And when they have checked their motions so as to be able to observe the separate acts of volition, they can afterwards so accelerate those motions, and of course so diminish the power, (or what may be regarded as the same thing, the time of attention,) that they cannot recollect the accompanying volitions. This is the rational and obvious supposition, that there is not an exclusion of volitions, but an inability to recollect them, on account of the slight degree of attention. Any other view necessarily implies an inexplicable jumble of voluntary and involuntary actions in the same performance.

(3) If there be no volitions, the action must be strictly and truly automatic; that is, it must, from the nature of the case, be the motion of a machine. It must always go on invariably in the same track, without turning to the right hand or to the left. Possibly this may be the case in playing the harpsichord, but it is by no means probable. And it certainly cannot be supposed to be the case in the performances of the equilibrist and of the actors of the circus, which were considered in the last chapter. Whatever may be the fact as to the player on the harpsichord, it is unquestionable, that the movements of the equilibrist, of the rope-dancer, and of the performer on horseback, do not succeed each other in a fixed and invariable order. No doubt the ordinary steps of the singular feats, which they perform, are familiar to them; but the process is an invariable one. It may be pronounced impossible them to perform experiments, which agree, in every part

ular, with preceding experiments. They are necessarily governed in their volitions and movements by a variety of circumstances, which arise on every particular occasion, and which could not be foreseen. Hence the muscular movements in these cases, being controlled by the will, are not mechanical; and as we have abundant reason to believe them often not less rapid in the performance than the muscular movements in playing the harpsichord, why could we consider these last mechanical and not voluntary?

(4) If the hypothesis of Reid and Hartley be true, and there is some general tendency or principle in our nature, by which actions originally voluntary are converted into mechanical actions. Nor will it be easy to show, why this principle should not extend further than mere bodily movements. It will be the result of this tendency to wrest all those powers which it reaches, whether bodily or mental, from the control of the will. In other words, when we consider the extent of its application, and the wonderful results, wherever it applies, we must conclude, that this principle will infallibly make men machines, mere automaton, before they have lived out half their days.—In view of these objections, the doctrine of Reid and Hartley is inadmissible.

#### §. 229. Of attention in legerdemain and ventriloquism.

It has with no little reason been thought, that the dexterity of jugglers, in practising tricks of legerdemain or lights of hand, illustrates and confirms in some measure the views, which have been given. These persons acquire the power of performing certain feats with astonishing rapidity by habit. The rapidity, with which they perform these feats, is undoubtedly the great secret of the imposition, which they are able to practice on the understandings of those, who observe them. The time, which they take in going through their tricks of legerdemain, is so very short, that the spectator is unable to exert that degree of attention, which is necessary to lay the foundation of memory; so that the performance is the same to him, in consequence of his inability to remember any thing, as if he had never seen it.

It may not be out of place briefly to remark here in explanation of VENTRILOQUISM, an art, by which persons can so modify their voice, as to make it appear to their audience to proceed from different distances and directions. The great requisite on the part of the ventriloquist is to be able to mimic sounds; and he will be likely to succeed nearly in proportion to his skill in this particular. The secret then of his acoustic deceptions will be sufficiently understood by referring to the statement in §. 40 viz. That, previous to experience, we are unable to refer sounds to any particular external cause.—The sound itself never gives us any direct and immediate indication of the place, or distance, or direction of the sonorous body. It is only by experience, it is only by the association of place with sound, that the latter becomes an indication of the former. Now supposing the ventriloquist to possess a delicate ear, which is implied in his ability to mimic sounds, he soon learns by careful observation the difference, which change of place causes in the same sound. Having in this way ascertained the sounds, which, in consequence of the associations men have formed, are appropriate to any particular distances, direction, or object, it is evident, whenever he exactly or very nearly imitates such sounds, that they must appear to his audience to come from such distance, object, or direction.—One part of the art, however, consists in controlling the attention of persons present, & in directing that attention to some particular place by a remark, motion, or some other method. If, for instance, the sound is to come from under a tumbler or hat, the performer finds it important to have their attention directed to that particular object, which gives a fine opportunity for the exercise of all those associations, which they have formed with any sound coming from a very confined place. All that then, that remains for him to do, is, to give his voice a modulation and on a low key, which we know from experience to be the character of confined sounds. There then seems to be a voice speaking under a tumbler or hat, and if any person should, either intentionally or unintentionally, lift these articles up, the ventriloquist immedi-

utters himself on a higher key, like a person, who had been very much confined, on being readmitted into the free and open air.—In all these cases, both of legerdemain and of ventriloquism, a great deal depends on the skill of the performer, in directing the attention of those, who witness the exhibition, to some particular object, or in diverting their attention from it; but in sleights of hand there is the still more difficult art of performing feats so rapidly as absolutely to prevent the degree of attention requisite for memory.

§. 230. Whether the mind can attend to more than one object at the same time?

In connection with what has already been said, we are in some degree prepared to consider the question, Whether the mind can attend to more than one thing at one and the same instant? The question can perhaps be stated more clearly thus; Whether the mind can attend at one and the same instant to objects, which we can attend to separately?—The question, when proposed as here, without any limitation, hardly admits a discussion. If a rose were presented to us, we can handle it; we can inhale its fragrance, and behold its colours at the same moment. The mind exists in the states of seeing, smelling, and feeling at once; that is to say, it is in a complex state. Whereas the question, as above stated, were answered in the negative, complexity in the states of the mind would be an impossibility.

But the question may be further simplified, and proposed thus; viz. Whether we can, *by means of one and the same sense*, simultaneously notice and attend to more than one object, which objects that sense is capable of attending to separately?—When the question is modified and stated in this way, it seems to be the general sentiment, that the mind notices only one thing at a time.

§. 231. On attending at the same time to different parts in music.

But there are certain facts, which at first sight contradict this doctrine, however generally it may have been enounced. For instance, it is the opinion with very many



persons, that, in a concert of music, a good ear can attend to different parts at the same time, and feel the full effect of the harmony. It is not denied, that they are able fully to feel the effect of the harmony; and it is also admitted, that they appear to attend to the different parts, which combine to form that harmony, at one and the same instant. But this *appearance*, (for we conceive it to be merely such,) is to be thus explained.—It appeared in the chapter on Intellectual Habits, that our external perceptions, like our other mental acts and laws, were susceptible of being quickened. By various examples it was seen, that they could be brought to an astonishing degree of rapidity of exercise. We suppose, therefore, that a HABIT has been formed in the case under consideration, and that the mind passes from one part of the music to the other with such quickness as to give us no perception of an interval of time. But we have just seen, that where the attention is so exceedingly slight, there is no remembrance, and we are unable to recal the mental acts. Hence we shall seem to be attending to all the parts at once. The apparent result will be the same, as if this were actually the fact. But as this mere appearance may be otherwise satisfactorily explained, it is not necessary to admit the doctrine of coexistent perceptions of distinct and separate sounds.

Nor is this all. It is to be remembered, that, in the case under consideration, one sense only, the sense of hearing, is employed. And it is a natural inquiry, if it can attend to more than one object at once, which it is capable of attending to separately, why may it not attend to three, five, twenty, or more? An objection certainly arises here and furthermore, the opinion, that the mind can simultaneously attend to separate objects by means of a single sense, strikes at the root of what there is abundant reason to consider a great and fixed law of our nature; viz. 1. the first intimations from the separate senses are simple and uncompounded.

§. 232. Of attention in the visual perception of external objects.

In discussing the subject of attention, Mr. Stewart,

connection with his views on that subject, introduces some remarks in respect to vision. He makes this supposition, That the eye is fixed in a particular position, and the picture of an object is painted on the retina. He then starts this inquiry,—Does the mind perceive the complete figure of the object at once, or is this perception the result of the various perceptions we have of the different points in the outline?—He holds the opinion, that the perception is the result of our perceptions of the different points in the outline, which he adopts as naturally consequent on such views, as the following. The outline of every body is made up of points or smallest visible portions; no two of these points can be in precisely the same direction; therefore, every point by itself constitutes just as distinct an object of attention to the mind, as if it were separated by some interval of empty space from all the other points. The conclusion, therefore, is, as every body is made up of parts, and as the perception of the figure of the whole object implies a knowledge of the relative situation of the different parts with respect to each other, that such perception is the result of a number of different acts of attention.

But if we adopt this ingenious explanation of Mr. Stewart, it is incumbent upon us to show, how it happens, that we appear to see the object at once? The answer is, that the acts of attention are performed with such rapidity, that the effect with respect to us is the same, as if the perception were instantaneous. A habit has been formed; the glance of the mind, in the highest exercise of that habit, is like lightning; there is no remembrance.

§. 233. Notice of some facts which favour the above doctrine.

There are various facts, which go to confirm Mr. Stewart's doctrine as to the mode of the perception of external objects.—When we look for the first time on any object, which is diversified with gaudy colours, the mind is evidently perplexed with the variety of perceptions which arise; the view is indistinct, which would not be the case, if there were only one, and that an immediate perception. And even in paintings, which are of a more

laudable execution, the effects at the first perception will be similar.—But there is another fact, which comes still more directly to the present point. We find, that we do not have as distinct an idea, at the first glance, of a figure of an hundred sides, as we do of a triangle or square. But we evidently should, if the perception of visible figure were the immediate consequence of the picture on the retina, and not the combined result of the separate perceptions of the points in the outline. Whenever the figure is very simple, the process of the mind is so very rapid, that the perception seems to be instantaneous. But when the sides are multiplied beyond a certain number, the interval of time necessary for these different acts of attention becomes perceptible. We are then distinctly conscious, that the mind labours from one part of the object to another, and that some time elapses before we grasp it as a whole.

§. 234. Rapid transference of attention one cause of difficulty in criticism.

Experience teaches us, that certain objects are fitted to give pleasure, while others are either indifferent, or impart disgust. We know the fact, but it is impossible for us to give any explanation of it, further than to say, that such is our constitution, or that we are thus formed. (See §. 21.) But then previously to the emotion of pleasure or displeasure, of satisfaction or of disgust, the mind is very active, and has not only a multitude of perceptions, but forms various comparisons. We will suppose, that the emotion excited is that of pleasure, and that the object which is the cause of it exhibits different qualities; some of them are pleasing, some are indifferent, and others are suited to cause disgust. All these different qualities are in a state of combination, and they mutually affect each other. Here the mind rapidly makes a discrimination: it fixes upon the particular parts of the object, which is supposed to possess many different qualities, and separates the elements of beauty; it assigns their due influence to those qualities, which are either indifferent or are displeasing; it takes a comparative view of the whole; and the result

of these various perceptions and comparisons is that new state of the mind, which we call a pleasing emotion. But we no sooner have the pleasing emotion, than we feel a sort of disinclination to retrace the previous steps. And when it is otherwise and we have an inclination to, the mental process has been so rapid, that we often meet with serious difficulty in detecting the separate steps of it in the order of their succession. So that we have here one cause of difficulty in criticism, for it comes within the province of the philosophy of criticism, to detect and point out those operations of the mind, which precede emotions either of pleasure or disgust. And in doing this, critics meet with the obstacle, which has been mentioned. We see here a cause also, why they are so often at variance with each other as to the precise ground of emotions of pleasure and the opposite; and also why others, who do not presume to take upon themselves the rank of critics, do not always assent to their expositions, and sometimes differ from them.—One of the great requisites in a critic is the ability to reflect steadily and carefully on the operations of the mind, in order that he may check them in the rapidity of their progress and detain them sufficiently long to be able to analyze them.

§. 235. Of exercising attention in reading.

If attention, as we have seen, be the foundation of memory, then we are furnished with a practical rule of considerable importance. The rule is, Not to give a hasty and careless reading of authors, but to read them with a degree of deliberation and thought.—It is the fault of some persons, that they are too quickly weary, that they skip from one author to another, and from one sort of knowledge to another. It is true, there are many things to be known; we would not have a person limit himself entirely to one science, but it is highly important, that he should guard against that rapid and careless transition from subject to subject, which has been mentioned. And why is it important? The intimation at the head of this section, that there cannot be memory without attention,

or rather that the degree of memory will vary with the degree of attention, suggests the answer. By yielding to the desire of becoming acquainted with a greater variety of departments of knowledge, than the understanding is able to master, and, as a necessary consequence, by bestowing upon each of them only a very slight attention, we remain essentially ignorant of the whole.

The person, who pursues such a course, finds himself unable to recal what he has been over; he has a great many half-formed notions floating in his mind, but these are so ill shaped and so little under his control as to be but little better than actual ignorance. This is one evil result from reading authors and of going over sciences in the careless way, which has been specified, that the knowledge thus acquired, if it can be called knowledge, is of very little practical benefit, in consequence of being so poorly digested and so little under control.—But there is another and perhaps more serious evil;—this practice greatly disqualifies one for all intellectual pursuits; the mind, having been so long left at liberty to wander from object to object without being called to account and subjected to the rules of salutary discipline, entirely loses at last the ability to dwell upon the subjects of its thoughts and to examine them. And when this power is once lost, there is but little ground to expect any solid attainments.

REFERENCES.—Locke's *Essay*, Bk. I. CH. X.; Reid's *Essays on the Intellectual Powers*, I, CH. VI.; *Essays on the Active Powers*, III, CHS. II, III.; Stewart's *Elements*, VOL. I, CH. II.; Helvetius, *De l'Esprit*, (*chap. de l'inégale capacité d'attention*;) Condillac's *Origin of Knowledge*, PT. I, SECT. II. CH. I.; Good's *Book of Nature*, SERIES II, LECT. VIII.; Watts' *Improvement of the Mind*, PT. I. CHS. IV, XV.; Brown's *Lectures*, XXXI, XLIII.; &c.

## CHAPTER TWENTY FIRST.

### MEMORY.

#### §. 236. Explanation of the faculty of memory.

**M**EMORY is that power or susceptibility of the mind, from which arise those conceptions, which are modified by the relation of past time. It is not a simple, but complex state of the intellectual principle, implying, (1) a conception of the object, (2) the relation of priority in its existence. That is, we not only have a conception of the object, but this conception is attended with the conviction, that it underwent the examination of our senses, or was perceived by us at some former period.

When we imagine, that we stand in the midst of a forest, or on the top of a mountain, but are snug all the while in our own chimney corner, these pleasing ideas of woods, and of skies painted over us, and of plains under our feet, are mere conceptions. But when with these insulated conceptions, we connect the relation of time ; and they glean from our souls, as the woods, plains, and mountains of our youthful days ; then those intellectual states, which were before mere conceptions, become REMEMBRANCES. And the susceptibility, which the mind possesses of these latter complex states, is what usually goes under the name of the power or faculty of MEMORY.

#### §. 237. Of differences in the strength of memory.

The susceptibility of remembrances is the common privilege of all, and, generally speaking, it is possessed in

nearly equal degrees. To each one there is given a sufficient readiness in this respect ; his ability to remember such, as to answer all the ordinary purposes of life. although there is in general a nearly equal distribution of this power, we find a few instances of great weakness, other instances of great strength of memory.

It is related of the Roman orator, Hortensius, by Scaeca, that, after sitting a whole day at a public sale, he gave an account from memory, in the evening, of all things with the prices and the names of the purchasers, and that this account when compared with what had been taken in writing by a notary, was found to be exact in every particular.

The following is an instance of strength of memory somewhat remarkable.—An Englishman, at a certain time came to Frederic the Great of Prussia, for the express purpose of giving him an exhibition of his power of recollection. Frederic sent for Voltaire, who read to his majesty a pretty long poem, which he had just finished. The Englishman was present, and was in such a position, that he could hear every word of the poem ; but was concealed from Voltaire's notice. After the reading of the poem was finished, Frederic observed to the author, that his production could not be an original one ; as there was a foreign gentleman present, who could recite every word of it. Voltaire listened with amazement to the strange claim he repeated, word for word, the poem, which he had written at so much pains in composing ; and giving way to a momentary freak of passion, he tore the manuscript in pieces. A statement, being made to him of the circumstances, mitigated his anger, and he was very willing to do penance for the suddenness of his passion by copying down the poem from a second repetition of it by the stranger, who was able to go through with it, as before.

A great number of instances of this description are found in the records of various individuals, but they may be considered as exceptions to the general features of the human mind, the existence of which cannot be explained on any known principles. As no one can tell, why

on the mountains is tall and large, while its neighbour, the same soil and of the same description of trees, remains stunted and dwarfish; so we find ourselves unable to give any philosophic explanation of such instances as have been mentioned.

but there are also weak memories, so much so, as to be early considered exceptions to the generally equal disposition of this mental susceptibility. Individuals can be found, from whose memory truths have passed away almost immediately after they have been acquired; and who, in the management of the common concerns of life, discover forgetfulness extremely unfortunate and perplexing. Instances of this kind are indeed not so frequently found as of an opposite description; because it is more interesting and satisfactory to the literary annalist to record excellencies, than the defects of the mind.\*

### B. Instances of powerful memory in operating with numbers.

Although it is evidently unnecessary to give a detailed

The following recent statement, and from a most unquestioned source, (Mr. Rhenius, missionary in Southern India, year 1827,) displays a tenacity of memory not unlike the very striking instances mentioned, and which have been already so often quoted in works.—"I have lately witnessed, (says he,) a remarkable instance of a wonderfully retentive memory in a young Brahmin from Madras. Three days ago, a gentleman wrote a sentence in English of which language the Brahmin knew nothing, containing 30 syllables: each syllable was numbered in order; all the syllables and their numbers were told him; not in their proper order, but beginning from three to twenty, then to six, and so on: when the sentence was finished, the Brahmin, arranging the numbers in his mind in regular order, told the sentence word for word. To-day I presented him an English sentence of sixty-nine syllables; and proceeded in telling him the numbers as before: while this was going on, he wrote a sentence in Hebrew, containing fourteen syllables, telling me the numbers in the same skipping manner: while this was going on, he repeated to us the sentence which he had heard three days before: and when the numbers of the new English and Hebrew sentences were finished, he told us both of them in a regular order, as he had read them from a book. This was certainly a prodigious feat, and astonished us all."



account of striking instances of memory, it will be sufficient to our purpose, briefly to allude to certain ordinary developements of its power in numerical calculations. An instance, illustrative of the class of facts we have now in view, may be found in the mental history of a well-known individual of the name of Buxton, a native of Derbyshire in England. This singular man learned the multiplication table in his youth; but further than that he had no education; not being able even to write his name. He invented an unwieldy sort of notation, reckoners call counter, by which he had gotten beyond millions, by tribes, and cramps;—a method, which probably no one else has thought it worth while to employ. Among his calculations in figures was that of multiplying five figures by as many, or dividing as large sums, without chalk, or slate, in as short time as the most experienced mathematicians could do it with them. It is mentioned as a well attested fact, that on a certain occasion he multiplied thirty nine figures by thirty nine figures. To him some time; but when we remember that the operation was performed without slate, or paper, or any other of the kind, it is well worthy of admiration.

Although we readily confess our inability to give a full explanation of these extraordinary facts, there are three things which will probably be found true in all the instances, which have been hitherto recorded.

(1) There is great power of ATTENTION. Numbers have peculiar charms for these persons. They feel a tense interest in combining them; and a deep feeling of interest is an essential requisite, and is implied in attention.

(2) There is a corresponding power of MEMORY obviously involved in the very remarkable numerical results, which they are capable of arriving at. It is what would naturally follow, (as we have already seen) from their superiour powers of attention.—(3) A method has been formed. This is the secret of the rapidity of their operations, which does not depend upon attention, or any unparralleled insight into the properties of numbers, but upon mere practice. The case is the same in all the other instances.

as that of the expert accountant already remarked on, who sums up in a minute a column of figures, which would occupy another person an half an hour.\*

§. 239. Of exploded opinions in regard to memory.

It is fortunate, that, at the present day, there is such a general disposition to apply the inductive method of reasoning, in attempting to ascertain the general facts or the laws of our mental operations. In general, no one stops to inquire, *how* the mind operates, although that may be a proper inquiry when pursued on the inductive method, but to describe its operations; and free from the impatience of those, who are continually offering hypotheses, we are

The following recent instances resemble the case of Buxton.—About the year 1811, a lad of very limited education, (Z. C.) a native of the state of Vermont attracted the public notice. It was found, that he could determine with the greatest ease and despatch the exact number of minutes or seconds in any given period of time. He was able to tell the exact product, arising from the multiplication of any number, which consisted of two, three, or four figures, by any other number, made up of the like number of figures. When a number, consisting of six or seven places of figures, was proposed to him, he was found able to state, almost as soon as it was mentioned, all the factors, of which it is composed. He could extract the square and cube roots of numbers, as in other cases, without the assistance of ink or pencil. He was asked the square root of 106,929, before the number could be written down, he immediately answered 327. Being required to give the cube root of 268,336,125, he did with equal promptness 645.

(3) A young lad in the State of Georgia, (at this time, 1828, he was years of age,) can reduce any given number of miles to inches, or seconds, &c., performing the whole operations in his head, and will give the result as quick as an expert calculator can with a pen. Among the questions asked him, were the following, which he solved with ease and expedition; How many inches are there in 1,373,489 miles? How often will a wheel, 5 feet and 6 inches in diameter, turn over in 90 miles? What is the cube root of 21,682? He has on more than one occasion, and even before he was nine years of age, raised the number twelve to its fifteenth power, that is to say—multiplied that number into itself fifteen times. He can multiply three figures by three figures. This faculty was observed in the lad at about eight years of age, and has greatly improved since.

required to observe and to classify. It has not been thus. Men have too often speculated, rather than examined; and have taken up with the mere suggestions of their fancies.

We have formerly been furnished with hypotheses in regard to the memory, as well as other acts of the mind, not to say any thing of the hypotheses in respect to the general nature of the mind itself. The following are the ideas of Malebranche, as they are found in his *Search for Truth*.—He supposes, that the soul has its residence in the brain, and in a particular part of it. In every sensation, which we have, and in all acts of the mind, there are certain changes in the fibres of the part of the brain, where the soul resides. This being admitted, it assures us, that the nature of memory is explained, to be remembered, that the fibres of the brain are affected in every new perception. Now what do we find in fact, when the branches of a tree have been bent in a particular direction, and especially, when they have been bent so for some time? Evidently, that they acquire an aptitude to be bent anew after the same manner. In the same way, the fibres of the brain, having received impressions by the course of the animal spirits, acquire a facility, or perhaps we may say, a habit of receiving certain arrangements. It is in this facility, that memory is said by Malebranche to consist, since we always remember the same things, when the brain is brought into the same state, and its fibres are similarly affected as at former times.

In some respects resembling this, is the hypothesis which is more recently to be found in Watt's *Improvement of the Mind*. This writer considers our ideas of objects to be pictures or images, thrown off from the objects, and at last reaching and inhering in the cerebral substance. A greater or less degree of permanent continuance in these pictures, which are inscribed in the brain, much the same as the impression of the seal upon wax, is implied in memory. When the print is made, and the cerebral substance is from age or other circumstances unyielding, there is a greater permanent

picture. But when it is otherwise, the picture, (that is, the remembrance,) rapidly vanishes.—Nothing, which is worthy to be called proof, has been offered in favour of either of these hypotheses; and they are mentioned, not because it is necessary to confute them, but because it may be found profitable to know, what erroneous opinions have sometimes found their way into the belief of well-meaning and learned men.

§. 240. Of the effects of disease on the memory.

But however disposed we may be to reject such fanciful hypotheses as those above alluded to, it seems to be well established, that there is a connection of some kind between the mind and body. We rightly and fairly infer, that there is such a connection, because there are a multitude of facts, which can be explained on no other supposition; but in what way, or to what extent it exists, it would be worse than futile to assert, with the limited knowledge, which we at present possess.—The general truth, however, that there is a connection of some sort between the mind and body, and, consequently, a reciprocal influence, is confirmed, besides other sources of evidence, by some facts in respect to the memory.—I have read, (says Dr. Beattie,) of a person, who, falling from the top of a house, forgot all his acquaintances, and even the faces of his own family; and of a learned author, who, on receiving a blow on the head by a folio dropping from its shelf, lost all his learning, and was obliged to study the alphabet the second time. He further remarks, that he was himself acquainted with a clergyman, who was attacked with a fit of apoplexy. After his recovery, he was found to have forgotten all the transactions of the four years immediately preceding, but remembered as well as ever what had happened before that period. The newspapers, which were printed during the period mentioned, were read with interest, and afforded him a great deal of amusement, being perfectly new. Thucydides, in his account of the plague of Athens, makes mention of some persons, who survived that disease: but their bodily sufferings had

affected their mental constitution, so that they had no recollection of their own former history, had forgotten their friends, and every thing else.

From many instances of this kind, and from others, which go to prove, that the state of the mind, on the other hand, often has a very perceptible effect on the bodily functions, it may justly be inferred, that there is a connection existing between the mind and body, and that a reciprocal influence is exercised. But what that precise connection is; whether it be limited, on the part of the body, to the brain; on what it depends; in what ways it is modified; are inquiries, which cannot be satisfactorily answered at present, whatever hypothesis may be proposed. Why a fever, or an attack of apoplexy, or a removal of a part of the brain, or an inordinate pressure of it, which are effects on the body, should affect the mind, a spiritual substance, which is supposed to be essentially different from matter, no one is able to say.—The fact, however, that such a reciprocal connection exists, suggests a reason for a due degree of attention to the physical system. The importance of a healthy and vigorous constitution of the body, as being very nearly connected with a corresponding health and vigour of the intellectual principle, should ever be remembered by those in the pursuit of knowledge.

§. 241. Suggestions on the ultimate restoration of thought.

It is said to have been an opinion of Lord Bacon, that no thoughts are lost, that they continue virtually to exist, and that the soul possesses within itself laws, which, whenever fully brought into action, will be found capable of producing the prompt and perfect restoration of the collected experiences of its whole past existence. This opinion seems to be adopted in an article on the laws of association in the work of S. T. Coleridge, entitled *BROOKFORD LITERARIA*. Various facts may undoubtedly be brought forward, going to show, that this doctrine, which involves important moral consequences, may have some foundation.—The subject is suggested here, in con-

sequence of the remarks in the last section, on the reciprocal influence of mind and body; it appearing beyond doubt, that in certain conditions of the body, especially when the brain is much affected, some of the laws of the mind undergo a vast increase both in strength and rapidity of operation. But as intellectual philosophy can never become the true "METAPHYSICS," the true "FIRST PHILOSOPHY," without a continual recurrence to facts and careful inductions from them, we take this opportunity to insert the substance of a statement to be found in the *Biographia* of the last mentioned writer. It is a statement of some facts, which became known to him, in a tour to Germany in 1798.

In a Catholic town of Germany, a young woman of four or five and twenty, who could neither read nor write, was seized with a nervous fever, during which she was incessantly talking Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, with much pomp and distinctness of enunciation. The case attracted much attention, and many sentences, which she uttered, being taken down by some learned persons present, were found to be coherent and intelligible, each for itself, but with little or no connection with each other. Of the Hebrew only a small portion could be traced to the Bible; the remainder was that form of Hebrew, which is usually called Rabbinic. Ignorant, and simple, and harmless, as his young woman was known to be, no one suspected any deception; and no explanation could for a long time be given, although inquiries were made for that purpose, in different families, where she had resided, as a servant.

Through the zeal, however, and philosophical spirit of a young physician, all the necessary information was in the end obtained. The woman was of poor parents, and at nine years of age had been kindly taken to be brought up by an old Protestant minister, who lived at some distance. He was a very learned man; being not only a great Hebraist, but acquainted also with Rabbinical writings, the Greek and Latin Fathers, &c. The passages, which had been taken down in the delirious ravings of the young woman, were found by the physician precisely to

agree with passages in some books in those languages, which had formerly belonged to him. But these facts were not a full explanation of the case. It appeared on further inquiry, that the patriarchal protestant had been in the habit for many years of walking up and down a passage of his house, into which the kitchen door opened, and to read to himself, with a loud voice, out of his favourite books. This attracted the notice of the poor and ignorant domestic, whom he had taken into his family; the passages made an impression on her memory; and although probably for a long time beyond the reach of her recollection when in health, they were at last vividly restored, and were uttered in the way above-mentioned, in consequence of the feverish state of the physical system; particularly of the brain.

From this instance, and from several others of the same kind, which Mr. Coleridge asserts can be brought up, he is inclined to educe the following positions or inferences.—(1) Our thoughts may, for an indefinite time, exist, in the same order, in which they existed originally, and in a latent or imperceptible state.—(2) As a feverish state of the brain, (and of course any other peculiarity in the bodily condition,) cannot create thought itself, nor make any approximation to it, but can only operate as an excitement or quickener to the intellectual principle; it is, therefore, probable, that all thoughts are, in themselves, imperishable.—In order greatly to increase the power of the intellect, he supposes it would require only a different organization of its material accompaniment.—(4) And, therefore, he concludes, the book of final judgment, which, the Scriptures inform us, will at the last day be presented before the individuals of the human race, may be no other, than the investment of the soul with a *celestial* instead of a *terrestrial* body; and that this may be sufficient to restore the perfect record of the multitude of its past experiences. He supposes, it may be altogether consistent with the nature of a living spirit, that heaven and earth should sooner pass away, than that a single act, or thought, should be loosened and effectual-

break off from the great chain of its operations.—  
 In drawing these conclusions, the exact language of the  
 author has not been followed, but the statement made will  
 be found to give what clearly seems to have been his  
 meaning.

§2. Further considerations relating to the same subject.

Among the above-mentioned conclusions, which undoubtedly  
 afford materials for reflection, and like other inquiries in-  
 the mind, are to be received or rejected in view of  
 what appears to be sustained by the views of some other  
 . The following passage in a recent work is much  
 to the present purpose.—“Past feelings, even should  
 be those of our earliest moments of infancy, never  
 can be under the influence of the law of association,  
 for they are constantly liable to be renovated, even  
 in the latest period of our life, although they may be in  
 at a state as not to be the object of consciousness.  
 It is evident then, that a cause of mental excitement  
 can act upon a sequence of extremely faint feelings,  
 and render ideas, of which the mind had long been pre-  
 viously unconscious, vivid objects of consciousness. Thus,  
 the recollection of a female in France, that while she was  
 subjected to such an influence, the memory of the Armori-  
 nguage, which she had lost since she was a child,  
 was fully returned.”\*

There is another class of facts, which may in their re-  
 sult at least be found to have a bearing on this inquiry ;  
 facts illustrative of the mental exercises of persons in a  
 waking state. It appears from the statements of per-  
 sons who have been on the point of drowning, but have  
 been rescued from that situation, that the operations of  
 the mind were peculiarly quickened. In this wonder-  
 ful activity of the mental principle, the whole past life,  
 with its thousand minute incidents, has almost simultane-  
 ously passed before them, and been viewed, as in a mir-  
 acle, scenes, and situations long gone by, and associates  
 long for years and perhaps buried, came rushing in

§3. Hibbert's *Philosophy of Apparitions*, Pt. IV. Ch. 5.



upon the field of intellectual vision, in all the activity distinctness of real existence.—Persons, who have in this situation, have further stated, that the length of appeared to be increased in proportion to the mental exercises; which agrees with the views on the measurement of time, expressed at §. 95; viz., That our opinion of length will depend on the succession or number of ideas.

Further; the proximate cause of this surprising alteration of the acts of the intellect appears to be, (as may be found to be the fact in most other cases,) an affection of the brain. That is to say; in consequence of stoppage of respiration, the blood is prevented from freely circulating through the lungs, and hence becomes accumulated in the brain. It would seem, that the blood is never thrown into the brain in unusual quantities, without being attended with unusual mental affections.

#### §. 243. Memory of the uneducated.

There is a peculiarity in the memories of uneducated people, of mechanics, farmers, day-labourers, and of others, who, from the pressure of their particular callings may have had but little means of mental culture. This peculiarity is seen in their great readiness in the recollection of places, times, arrangements in dress and in beings, local incidents, &c. In their narrations they are found to specify the time of events; not only the year, but the month, and day; and in their description of persons and places are not less particular. This trait in the mental character of this class of people seems to have first attracted the notice of Shakespeare.

Mrs. Quickly, in reminding Sir John Falstaff of his promise of marriage, discovers her readiness of recollection in the specification of the great variety of circumstances, under which the promise was made.—*Thou dost swear to me on a parcel-gilt goblet, sitting in my Dolphin chamber, at the round table, by a sea-coal fire, on Wednesday Whitsun week, when the prince broke thy head, for like him to a singing man of Windsor, &c.*—The coachman Cornelius Scriblerus gives an account of what he had

bear-garden ;—*Two men fought a prize ; one was a fair  
serjeant in the guards ; the other black, a butcher ; the  
serjeant had red trousers, the butcher blue ; they fought upon  
age about four o'clock, and the serjeant wounded the butcher  
in the leg.*

The explanation of this peculiarity of memory in common people is this.—It will be kept in mind, that our remembrances are merely conceptions, modified by relations of past time. Removing then the modification of time, and the remaining element of our remembrances will be conceptions. Our conceptions cannot be called up by a mere voluntary effort, because to will the existence of a conception necessarily implies the actual existence of the conception already in the mind. Our conceptions, therefore, arise in the mind on the principles of association or simple suggestion.—We come, then, directly to the fact, which explains that peculiarity or characteristic of memory, of which we are speaking.

The knowledge, which is possessed by persons of very small education, will be found to be connected together the most obvious and easy principles of association ; for instance, contiguity in place and time. These people have been very much, we may say chiefly, in the practice of associating those things, which happened at the same time, or were proximate in position. It may be thought, that mere time and place are very unimportant relations, but however that may be, they most strongly seize the notice of persons of small education ; and by means of them, their overflowing multitude of remembrances is kept in place. Having by almost constant exercise greatly strengthened the tendency to those associations, which arise in consequence of mere contiguity, they can very easily tell you, not only the precise place, where any thing has happened, but almost every thing, which has happened in the immediate neighbourhood ; not only the time, when the event occurred, but many other things, which occurred about the same period. (See in connection with these remarks, §. 197.)

## §. 244. Memory of men of philosophic minds

From speaking of the power of remembrance in uneducated, we naturally turn to persons of a more and philosophic mental character. It has often been marked of such, that they discover a want of recollection. The servant in the family of the philosopher will be likely to know much more about the fences, and cattle of the neighbours; will be minutely acquainted with their individual dress, manners, and habits, than the philosopher himself. But this, he has an aptness, an ability at remembering of this nature, which his philosophic master evidently does not possess.—Again, we suppose a battle to have been fought; persons of limited intellectual culture can tell you the precise day of the month, the exact number of troops, the names of the regiments, the amount of killed and wounded, and many trifling incidents of it, whether solemn or ludicrous, which are fitted solely to enliven the narrations of the fireside. But the philosopher, who has read the same accounts, does not remember these particulars, and finds it a very difficult thing to do it. But we perceive, that his mind has been probably employed in reflections on the causes of war, on various striking developements of human character, on its heat and bustle, and on its effects upon the happiness or misery of families, and nations.

Many have imagined, that the memory of the philosopher is better, because it deals so much in minute particulars, and is intrinsically stronger, than of others. It is no doubt a more imposing species of memory, but it probably answers the purpose of those, in whom it is found. But mere contiguity in time and place, which is the sole principle that binds together events in the memory of such persons, is of but small consequence in the estimation of the philosopher. He looks more to the nature of things; their mere outward and circumstances do not particularly arrest his attention. Consequently his knowledge is connected together

obvious and ready, but more important principles, such as analogy, contrast, cause and effect.

§. 245. Of the memory of the aged.

A defect of memory is often noticed in persons, who are advanced in years. Very few retain those powers of recollection, which they possessed in early days. "Age, says Ossian, is now on my tongue, and my soul has failed ; memory fails on my mind."

The failure of this mental susceptibility in the aged seems to be owing to two causes, viz., the impaired state of the organs of perception, and a defect of attention.

(1) *Their organs of external perception are impaired.*

We find it difficult, in consequence of the failure of their sense of hearing, to converse with people, advanced in years, and it requires a great effort, both on our part and theirs, to make them understand what we say. The most conclusive arguments, and flashes of wit, and rich strains of music have in a great measure ceased to excite in them any interest.—There is a like failure of the sense of seeing also. They no longer take pleasure in the delightful aspects of creation ; and the waving forest, and the gay beams of the sun, although they have not ceased to have charms for others, have none for them.—All the other senses fail of their wonted operation in the same way ; and the natural and necessary consequence is, that the ideas which are let in by the senses, make but a very feeble impression, and are almost immediately erased from the mind.

(2) *The second cause of the weakness of memory, of which all people complain, is a defect in attention.*—That mental exercise, to which we give the name of attention, always implies desire, an emotion of interest ; and without an emotion of this description, it cannot exist. But the world, including in the term what is beautiful in nature, and what is important in the duties and callings of life, has at last ceased to excite the emotions, which it formerly awakened. The aged are like the prisoner, released in the period of the French revolution, from the Bastille ; they

find themselves, as it were, in a new creation, which passes before them with great indistinctness, and with which they feel but little sympathy. And why should it be thought unnatural, that they should neglect in some measure that scene of things, which has already learnt to forget and to neglect them? As their organs of external perception have failed them, and there has also been a defect of attention, the memory, as a natural consequence, has become powerless and broken.

It should, however, be remarked here, that, notwithstanding what has been said, aged people often recal, with great readiness and precision, the feelings and the incidents of their youth. As when a man, who has been greatly prospered, but who at last meets with sudden and disastrous reverses of fortune, finds, in this new state of things, his obsequious attendants fleeing away and turning against him, while only a few early friends remain unmoved in evil and good report; so early feelings and early associations appear to cling with a faithful fondness to the shattered intellects of the aged. The old soldier, who had a share in the American Revolution, will sit down by his fireside and describe with great particularity the scenes, where he toiled and bled, and yet be quite unable to give an account of the incidents of the preceding week.

The explanation of this trait in the mental aspects of the aged seems to be this.—As a general statement, our early feelings and our early associations are the strongest. That they should be so is not strange, since we have then entered on a state of things, which, in its essential features, is new, and which, in all its diversities of duty, and pleasure, and danger, attracts, and excites us by continual novelty. Who can forget the plains where he wandered in early life? Who can erase from his recollection the associates of those days of wonder, activity, and hope? Who can obliterate from his heart his toils, and his sufferings, and his joys, all which assumed a peculiar emphasis and importance, being connected with future prospects, the adversities and the successes of after life?—These things remain, while others vanish. Such feelings, #

deeply fixed in the mind, and bound together and made permanent by the strength of a mutual association, are frequently recalled; they recur to the soul in the activity and bustle of life, and in those more favoured moments, when it is given up to silent and solemn meditations. The effect of this frequent recurrence can easily be imagined. The early impressions, which are the subjects of such recurrence become in time, if one may be allowed the expression, a part of the mind itself; they seem to be woven into its existence. Hence old men, who have no eye and no hearing for the events, that are passing around them, repeat, with the greatest animation, the stories of scenes, and actions, and friendships of fifty years ago.

§. 246. Memory of persons of a rich imagination.

It is a remark of Dr. Watts, that a fine genius is often found to have but a feeble memory. By a fine genius he probably understood what we commonly mean by a person of a rich imagination; that is, one, who is furnished with a rich store of images, has readiness in the perception of their congruity or incongruity with each other, and of course has great power in the formation of various new combinations.

Such a person finds a luxuriance of wealth in himself. He is continually and happily entertained with the new pictures, which his imagination creates. Hence he does not so much entertain himself with outward events; many facts, which are particularly noticed and retained by others, pass by him unregarded; and, therefore, quickly escape from his remembrance. Montaigne (§. 8.) seems to have been a person of this description; acquainted with the general principles of the sciences, possessing an exuberance of intellectual riches, but utterly incapable of remembering dates, times, places, and the numerous matter-of-fact of every day's occurrence.

Weakness of memory in persons of a rich imagination discovered also in their reading of books. The reason it seems to be a too great confidence in their own abili-

Conscious of their own resources, they are tempted to

peruse books in a hasty and careless manner, and without due attention. The result of this careless manner, both in respect to events and the sentiments of authors, is that they are but imperfectly known at first, and are very speedily forgotten. This will not appear strange, in connection with the remark at §. 225, on the connection existing between memory and attention. The weakness of memory, therefore, in persons of rich imagination is not constitutional and permanent, but a matter of mere accident; and, for this reason, the more discreditable. When such persons have habitually taken an interest in the common affairs of life, they are found to remember their details, however unpoetical; and in their reading of authors nothing seems to be wanting, but interest and attention, in order to secure them from the reproach, under which they are thought to labour.

§. 247. On the compatibility of strong memory and good judgment.

By JUDGMENTS we in general understand nothing more than the opinions, which we form in view of evidence; in other words, they are the results or conclusions of moral reasoning. By a person of *good* judgment, we generally mean one, who examines subjects with caution, and whose results, founded on such examination, for the most part, prove correct. That persons may possess, in a very high degree, the susceptibility of memory, and still be incapable of correct moral reasoning, or of exhibiting any other indications of a well judging mind, is a fact well known. There have even been idiots, who certainly could present no claims to the character of judging well, that have, nevertheless, been remarkable for memory. Such are, indeed, instances of an extreme kind;—however, there are not wanting many other cases, where strong memories have been found united with feeble judgment. On this fact, it may be remarked, as follows.

The connection between a strong memory and a weak judgment, it may be said without any hesitation, is not necessary, but merely accidental; that is, is not the constitution of nature, but in general the result of circumstan-

As it is an accidental state of things, and not any essential and permanent in our mental structure, we look for its appropriate cause in erroneous mental line.—It may well be supposed, that those, who s strong memories, are not insensible of their excel- in this respect ; and the approbation, which they received in consequence of it, encourages them to re up a dry collection of all facts, which will, in any ear repetition. Dates, genealogies, local incidents, onal anecdotes, are all seized, and retained with pe- avidity. But too much intent upon the mere dates umes of things, such persons fail to inquire into their ature ; they neglect other and more important forms ntal discipline ; and thus justly sustain the reputa- f possessing a showy, rather than discriminating and knowledge. In instances of this description, the ns, by which the suggested trains of thought are as- ed, are the more slight and obvious ones, such as of place, &c. But there are some exceptions to this e course ; individuals may be found, who, with an shing ability to recal the most unimportant inci- of daily occurrence, as well as the dry details of ical facts, combine the far more enviable ability of minating the true differences of things, of combining i for the attainment of ends, and of rightly estima- vidence in its various applications ; which are among haracteristics of men of sound judgment.

§. 248. Intentional memory or recollection.

he definition of MEMORY, which has been given, is, it is the power or susceptibility of the mind, from arise those conceptions, which are modified by the m of past time. This definition necessarily resolves ry in good part into association. It is, therefore, to e observed, that our trains of associated thought are luntary ; that is, are not directly under the control WILL. They come and depart, without it being e for us to exercise any thing more, than an indi- vernment over them. (See §. 212.) It follows



from these facts, that our remembrances also are unitary ; or, in other words, it is impossible for a member in consequence of merely choosing to remember. To will or to choose to remember any thing implies that the thing in question is already in the mind ; and there is not only an impossibility resulting from the nature of the mind, but also an absurdity, in the calling up thought by volition. Our chief power, in quickening and strengthening the memory, may be found to consist in our skill in applying and combining the various principles or laws of association. This brings us to a consideration of what is called **INTENTIONAL MEMORY OR RECOLLECTION** ; a subject, which will be illustrated in the section above referred to.

Whenever we put forth an exercise of intentional memory, or make a formal attempt to remember some circumstance, it is evident, that the event in general, and the circumstance when recalled will be found to be what must have previously been an object of attention. If, for instance, we remember the great outlines of some story, we, in the first instance, give a complete account of the circumstances which we wish to do. We make an effort to recall circumstances not remembered in two ways.—We first, in the *first* place, form different suppositions, and select that which agrees best with the general outlines ; the general outlines of the subject being detained before us by a considerable degree of permanency, by means of a strong feeling of desire or interest. This method of recalling thoughts is rather an inference of reasoning, than a genuine exercise of memory.

We may, in the *second* place, merely delay up thoughts, which we already hold possession of ; and involve them in our minds ; until, aided by some power of association, we are able to lay hold of the particular ideas, for which we were searching. Thus, when we endeavour to recite what we had previously committed to memory, but are at a loss for a particular passage, we repeat, a number of times, the concluding words

ceding sentence. In this way, the sentence, which is forgotten, is very frequently recalled.

§. 249. Instance illustrative of the preceding.

We had occasion, in a former section, to mention the case of an individual, who, in consequence of an attack of palsy, forgot all the transactions of the four years immediately preceding. It is further to be observed here, that the same individual recovered by degrees all he had forgotten; so as after a while to have nearly or quite as full a remembrance of that period, as others. In this instance the power of the principles of association appears to have been at first completely prostrated by the disease, without prospect of their being again brought into action, except by some assistance afforded them. This assistance, however, was reading and conversation. By reading old newspapers and by conversation, he, from time to time, brought upon ideas, which he had not only been possessed of before, but which had been associated with other ideas, forming originally distinct and condensed trains of thought. All this whole series were restored.—Other series again were recovered by applying the methods of INTENTIONAL COLLECTON; that is, by forming suppositions and connecting them with the ideas already recovered, or by continually revolving in mind such trains as were restored, thus rousing up others. Such, we can hardly doubt, have been, in the main, the process, by which the person of whom we are speaking, recovered the knowledge, which had been lost.

These views, in addition to what has now been said, may be illustrated also by what we sometimes observe in old men. Question them as to the events of early life; at times they will be unable to give any answer whatever. But whenever you mention some prominent incident of their young days, or perhaps some friend, on whom their associations have gathered, it will often be found, that their memory revives, and that they are able to state particulars, in respect to which they were previously silent.

## §. 250. Marks of a good memory.

The great purpose, to which the faculty of memory is subservient, is, to enable us to retain the knowledge, which we have from our experiences, for future use. The marks of a good memory, therefore, are these three, viz., Facility in receiving ideas, tenacity in retaining them, and readiness in bringing them forward on necessary occasions.

FIRST ; of facility in receiving ideas.—We very frequently find this characteristic of a good memory in persons of small education ; and it is not incompatible with a very limited genius. The intellectual habits of persons of small education, and the methods, which they follow in retaining their knowledge, have been before partially explained. It is not, therefore, wonderful, that they should exhibit great facility in the reception of ideas of remembrance, inasmuch as they deal almost wholly with the outside or surface of things, not only seizing upon their obvious and obtrusive appearances, but connecting them together by the most obvious laws of association.

SECOND ; of power of retaining ideas.—Memories, which have great facility in the reception, are sometimes very tenacious of what they have gotten ; but most commonly the latter quality characterizes the memory of a different class of people ;—we mean persons of reflection who deal more with principles than facts, except when facts are brought forward to confirm and illustrate principles.

THIRD ; of readiness in producing what is remembered.

In general those persons, who possess great facility in the reception of ideas, are no less ready in calling them into service, when occasion offers. It is not common to find them at a loss. But as their thoughts are connected together by slight and casual relations, they often succeed each other in a comparatively irregular manner. For the most part, they are found to have ideas enough, and words enough ; but it is not so evident, that what they have to say is always suitable to the occasions, on which it is produced. These persons, however, often give an interest and a variety to common conversation, which is very difficult for minds of a higher order to do.—

er class of persons have reduced the particulars of their knowledge to principles; it is, therefore, firmly fixed and cannot be readily wrested from them; but principles cannot be so easily brought forward on ordinary occasions, nor are they found to be so attractive and acceptable with the multitude, as facts. The incidents of disorder, when the story is well told, arrest the attention of the great mass of people much more strongly, than a philosophical dissertation on the nature and aggravation of the crime.

§. 251. Of the advantages of this faculty.

But whether we have a memory, possessing more or less of those marks, which belong to it, as it exists in its best state of perfection; it is a faculty always securing us inestimable benefits.—As there could not be any comparison of our ideas without it, it is, in the first place, the foundation of the greatest part of our knowledge; and without its assistance the human mind would necessarily sink into the lowest form of idiocy.—And, secondly, the susceptibility of remembrances is not only necessary to us as *intellectual*, but also as *moral* beings.—Without memory we should certainly be incapable of gratitude for kindnesses received. We should be incapable of esteem, which is founded on a view of a variety of acts and qualities; and be destitute also of many other moral emotions and judgments.

§. 252. Means of improving the memory.

But if this faculty be so exceedingly important, it becomes us to consider in what way it may be improved. At this point the following directions are particularly worthy to be followed.

(1) *We are, in the first place, to make a selection among particulars of our knowledge.*—It is unwise to try to remember every thing. A memory thus loaded may be compared to what Milton calls the Christian Fathers, a *fish-net*, which, (he says,) comes floating down to us on the stream of time, and bearing articles of most disproportion-

ate value, shells and shell-fish, jewels and pebbles, sticks and straws, sea-weeds and mud. It is important, therefore, to distinguish things aright; and in the multitude of particulars of greater and less value, to retain those only, which are of some real worth.

(2) *We are to refer our knowledge, as much as possible, to general principles.*—To refer our knowledge to general principles is to classify it; and this is perhaps the best mode of classification. If a lawyer or merchant were to throw all their papers together promiscuously, they could not calculate on much readiness in finding what they might at any time want. If a man of letters were to record in a common place-book all the ideas and facts, which occurred to him, without any method, he would experience the greatest difficulty in applying them to use. It is the same with a memory, where there is no classification. Whoever fixes upon some general principle, whether political, literary, or philosophical, and collects facts in illustration of it, will find no difficulty in remembering them, however numerous; when without such general principles the recollection of them would have been extremely burdensome.

(3) *Never be satisfied with a partial or half acquaintance with things.*—There is no less a tendency to intellectual, than to bodily inactivity; students, in order to avoid intellectual toil, are too much inclined to pass on in a hurried and careless manner. This is injurious to the memory. “Nothing (says Dugald Stewart) has such a tendency to weaken, not only the powers of invention, but the intellectual powers in general, as a habit of extensive and various reading without reflection.” Always make it a rule fully to understand what is gone over. Those, who are determined to grapple with the subject in hand, whatever may be its nature, and to become master of it, soon feel a great interest; truths, which were at first obscure, become clear and familiar. The consequence of this increased clearness and interest is an increase of attention; and the natural result of this is, that the truths are very strongly fixed in the memory. A perpetual vacillation between the

urs and toils of science is a species of "halting between two opinions," that is not less injurious in learning, than a religion.

(4) *The memory may be strengthened by exercise.*—Our minds, when left to sloth and inactivity, lose all their vigour; but when they are kept in exercise, and, after performing what was before them, are tasked with new requisitions, it is not easy to assign limits to their ability. This seems to be a general and ultimate law of our nature. It is found, that all the mental susceptibilities are strengthened by exercise, much the same as our bodily powers; and the faculty of memory certainly not less than others.

(5) *Consider the nature of the study, and make use of those aids, which are thus afforded.*—This rule may be illustrated by the mention of some departments of science. Thus, in acquiring a knowledge of geography, the study is to be pursued, as much as possible, with the aid of good globes, charts, and maps. It requires a great effort of memory, and generally an unsuccessful one, to recollect the relative extent and situation of places, the numerous physical and political divisions of the earth, from the book. The advantages of studying geography with maps, globes, &c. are two, (1)—The form, relative situation, and extent of countries become, in this case, ideas, or rather conceptions of sight; such conceptions (§. 116.) are very vivid, and are more easily recalled to remembrance, than others.

(2) Our remembrances are assisted by the law of contiguity in place (§. 197), which is known to be one of the most efficient aids. When we have once, from having a map or globe before us, formed an acquaintance with the general visible appearance of an island, a gulf, an ocean, or a continent, nothing is more easy than to remember the subordinate divisions or parts. Whenever we have examined, and fixed in our minds the general appearance and outlines of a particular country, we do not easily forget the situation of those countries, which are contiguous.

We find another illustration of this rule in the reading of history.—There is such a multitude of facts in historical writings, that to endeavour to remember them all is

fruitless; and if it could be done, would be of very small advantage. Hence, in reading the history of any country, fix upon two or three of the most interesting epochs; make them the subject of particular attention; learn the spirit of the age, and the private life and fortunes of prominent individuals; in a word, study these periods not only as annalists, but as philosophers. When they are thus studied, the mind can hardly fail to retain them; they will be a sort of landmarks; and all the other events in the history of the country, before and afterwards, will naturally arrange themselves in reference to them. The memory will strongly seize the prominent periods, in consequence of the great interest felt in them; and the less important parts of the history of the country will be likely to be retained, so far as is necessary, by aid of the principle of contiguity; and without giving them great attention.—Further, historical charts or genealogical trees of history are of some assistance for a similar reason, that maps, globes, &c. are in geography.

This rule for strengthening the memory will apply also to the more abstract sciences.—“In every science, says Stewart, (CH. VI, §. 3,) the ideas, about which it is peculiarly conversant, are connected together by some particular associating principle; in one science, for instance, by associations founded on the relation of cause and effect; in another, by the associations founded on the necessary relations of mathematical truths.”

§. 253. Of committing to writing as a means of aiding the memory.

Among other means of aiding the memory, it is often recommended to commit to writing the knowledge, which we acquire. This practice, if not carried too far, so as greatly to supersede the direct exercise of the memory, is attended with certain advantages, which justify an occasional resorting to it.—(1) Often in the course of a person's opportunities of reading and of intercourse with the world, he becomes acquainted with facts, with which he is unwilling to burden his memory, and which he is equally unwilling to lose. Here it is proper to resort to

which, at the same time, leaves the memory subjects, and retains what may be found at period important.—(2) In the progress of experience and investigations, he arrives at tant conclusions; for in literature, and in the of science, and in the philosophy of hu-, there are certain principles to be ascertained, first rank, and exert their influence on all col-ries. The means or process, by which he em, is permitted to fade away from the mind, as no desire to remember it. But it may id desirable to call in the aid of writing in vent the possibility of a-like result with those inciples, which he has established with no . These occasional records will not only se-eat truths he has gained; but will furnish of the gradual developement of the mind, and iminations concerning the laws, by which it is

Of Mnemonics or systems of artificial memory.

tem of mnemonics or of artificial memory is ethod of connecting in the mind things diffi-membered, with things easily remembered, so it to retain and recollect the former by means ”—The things easy to be remembered are nple verses, or the walls and compartments of grotesque pictures, and the like. Important be connected with these, in the expectation, rcer will be remembered, because the latter are. doubt possible to give a temporary aid to the such arbitrary arrangements; by associating ith a set of sounds, places, and images. Such may occasionally be of some advantage to pub- s, and to persons, who are called to remember nber of insulated facts. But there is reason to e benefit is more than counterbalanced by bur- l distracting the memory with what is allowed- sand perhaps ridiculous. However this may



be, it is generally admitted to be the fact, that systems, that are proposed for use at the present are too complicated for plans, which profess to render acquisition of knowledge more easy. They can be adopted into general use, unless they are rendered simple ; nor do we apprehend, that a person who follows the rules for strengthening and applying the memory above laid down, will stand greatly in need of any helps in recollecting most things, that will be useful and important.

NOTE. Locke's Essay, Bk. II. CH. X. ; Reid's Inquiry on the Intellectual Powers, III. ; Beattie on the Memory, Helvetius, DE L' ESPRIT, DISC. III, chs. III, IV. ; HUME, SECT. II, ch. XI. ; Stewart's Elements, CHAP. BROWN'S LECTS. XLI. ; Cabanis, Rapports du Physique du Moral De L' Homme, *Mem. IV*, §. x. ; besides many valuable writers on this subject too numerous to be cited.—For an account of Systems of Artificial Memory, see the New Art of Memory on the Principles of Gregor von Feinagle, London, 3d ed. 1813.

## CHAPTER TWENTY SECOND.

### DREAMING.

#### 1. Definition of dreams and the prevalence of them.

approaches perhaps sufficiently near to a correct opinion of dreams to say, that they are our mental operations while we are asleep.—The intellects and exercises, which go under this name, excited much interest. It is undoubtedly one

of the attention, which the subject of our dreams elicited among all classes of people, that they evaluate; it being very difficult, if not impossible, for a person, who has not had more or less of this ex-

perience. Mr. Locke, however, tells us of an individual, who dreamed till the twenty sixth year of his age, who happened to have a fever, and then dreamed for some time. Plutarch also mentions one Cleon, a friend who lived to an advanced age, and yet had never once in his life, and remarks, that he had heard nothing reported of Thrasymedes.

Undoubtedly these persons dreamed very seldom, as that some dream much more than others; but it is that they may have dreamed at some times, and forgotten it. So that it cannot with certainty be inferred from such instances as these, that there are any, entirely exempt from dreaming.

#### 2. Connection of dreams with our waking thoughts.

In giving an explanation of dreams, our attention is first

arrested by the circumstance, that they have an in relationship with our waking thoughts. The great of our waking experiences appear in the form of trains of associations; and these trains of associated ideas, in ter or less continuity, and with greater or less variety continue when we are asleep. Many facts show this.

Condorcet, (a name famous in the history of France) told some one, that, while he was engaged in abstract profound calculations, he was frequently obliged to them in an unfinished state, in order to retire to rest that the remaining steps and the conclusion of his calculations have more than once presented themselves in dreams.—Franklin also has made the remark, that the bearings and results of political events, which had troubled him much trouble while awake, were not unfrequently unfolded to him in dreaming.—“In my sleepless hours, and in my *dreams*, (says Fouché, when fleeing from threatened inflictions of arbitrary power,) I imagine myself surrounded by executioners, and seemed, as I held, in the native country of Danté, the inexorable of his infernal gates.”\*

It seems clearly to follow from such statements, which are confirmed by the experience of almost every person, that our dreams are fashioned from the materials of the thoughts which we have while awake; in other words, they will, in a *great* degree, be merely the repetition of our customary and prevailing associations.

§. 257. Dreams are often caused by our sensations.

But while we are to look for the materials of our dreams in thoughts which had previously existed, we further find that they are not beyond the influence of those slightly sensations, of which we are susceptible even in the state of sleep. These sensations, slight as they are, are the means of introducing one set of associations rather than another.

Dugald Stewart relates an incident, which may be

\* *Memoirs of Fouché, duke d'Otranto, minister of the Police of France, p. 267.*

sidered an evidence of this, that a person, with whom he was acquainted, had occasion, in consequence of an indisposition, to apply a bottle of hot water to his feet when he went to bed, and the consequence was, that he dreamed he was making a journey to the top of mount Ætna, and that he found the heat of the ground almost insupportable. There was once a gentleman in the English army, who was so susceptible of audible impressions, while he was asleep, that his companions could make him dream of what they pleased. Once, in particular they made him go through the whole process of a duel, from the preliminary arrangements to the firing of the pistol, which they put into his hand for that purpose, and which, when it exploded, waked him.

A cause of dreams closely allied to the above is the variety of sensations, which we experience from the stomach, viscera, &c.—Persons, for instance, who have been for a long time deprived of food, or have received it only in small quantities hardly enough to preserve life, will be likely to have dreams, in some way or other directly relating to their condition. Baron Trenck relates, that being almost dead with hunger, when confined in his dungeon, his dreams every night presented to him the well filled and luxurious tables of Berlin, from which, as they were presented before him, he imagined he was about to relieve his hunger.

The state of health also has considerable influence, not only in producing dreams, but in giving them a particular character. The remark has been made by medical men, that acute diseases, particularly fevers, are often preceded and indicated by disagreeable and oppressive dreams.

#### §. 258. Explanation of the incoherency of dreams. (1st cause.)

There is frequently much of wildness, inconsistency, and contradiction in our dreams. The mind passes very rapidly from one object to another; strange and singular incidents occur. If our dreams be truly the repetition of our waking thoughts, it may well be inquired, How this wildness and inconsistency happen?

The explanation of this peculiarity resolves itself into two parts.—The **FIRST** ground or cause of it is, that our dreams are not subjected, like our waking thoughts, to the control and regulation of surrounding objects. While we are awake, our trains of thought are kept uniform and coherent by the influence of such objects, which continually remind us of our situation, character, and duties; and which keep in check any tendency to reverie. But in sleep the senses are closed; the soul is accordingly in a great measure excluded from the material world, and is thus deprived of the salutary regulating influence from that source.

§. 259. Second cause of the incoherency of dreams.

In the second place, when we are asleep, our associated trains of thought are no longer under the control of the mental power or susceptibility, which we term the **WILL**. We do not mean to say, that the operations of that susceptibility are suspended at such times, and that volitions have no existence. On the contrary, there is sufficient evidence of the continuance of its exercises in some degree; since volitions must have made a part of the original trains of thought, which are repeated in dreaming; and furthermore, we are often as conscious of exercising or putting forth volitions when dreaming as of any other mental acts, for instance, imagining, remembering, assenting, or reasoning. When we dream, that we are attacked by an enemy sword in hand, but happen as we suppose in our dreaming experiences, to be furnished in self-defence with an instrument of the same kind, we dream, that we *will* to exert it for our own safety and against our antagonist, and we as truly in this case put forth the mental exercise which we term *volition*, as, in any other, we exercise remembrance, or imagine, or reason in our sleep.

Admitting that the power or susceptibility of willing continues to act in sleep, it is quite evident, that the volitions, which are put forth by it, have ceased to exercise their customary influence in respect to our mental operations. But here it will be said, that the will is unable to

ise a direct influence over the successions of thought, when we are awake. This point has been already explained sufficiently. (See §. 212.) The conclusion, at which we arrived, was, that, although we have no direct, we have an indirect power over the successions of thought, which is very considerable ; for instance, by means of a vig of desire or interest we fix our attention upon some particular part of any general subject, which has been presented, and thus give a new direction to the whole train of mental operations. Although this power, which we exercise, is indirect, we justly consider it a voluntary power, and attribute it to the faculty of the will. But the moment we are soundly asleep, this influence ceases, and we are in connection with the other cause above mentioned, which produces the wildness, incoherency, and contradictions, which exist.

A person while he is awake has his thoughts, (admitted to the full extent the power, which is commonly ascribed to association,) under such government, and is able, to exert an indirect influence of volitions, so to direct them, as to bring them in the end to some conclusion, which he desires and which he wishes to arrive at. But in dreams there is all directing and governing influence, both internal and external, is at an end, our associations seem to be thrown forward, much like a ship at sea without a rudder, whatever it may happen.

§. 260. Apparent reality of dreams. (1st cause.)

When objects are presented to us in dreams, we regard them as real ; and events, and combinations and series of events appear the same. We feel the same interest and resort to the same expedients, as in the parties or enjoyments of real life. When persons are introduced, as forming a part in the transactions of our dreams, we see them clearly in their living attitudes and features ; we converse with them and hear them speak and behold them move, as if actually present.

The reason of this greater vividness of our dreaming perceptions and of our firm belief in their reality seems to

be this. The subjects, upon which our thoughts are then employed, occupy the mind exclusively. We can form a clearer conception of an object with our eyes shut, than we can with them open, as any one will be convinced on making the experiment; and the liveliness of the conception will increase in proportion, as we can suspend the exercise of the other senses. In sound sleep, not only the sight, but the other senses also may be said to be closed; and the attention is not continually diverted by the multitude of objects, which arrest the hearing and touch, when we are awake.

It is, therefore, a most natural supposition, that our conceptions must at such times be extremely vivid and distinct. At §. 119, we particularly remarked upon conceptions or those ideas which we have of absent objects of perception, which possess this vividness of character. And it there appeared, that they might be attended with a momentary belief even when we are awake. But as conceptions exist in the mind when we are asleep in a much higher degree distinct and vivid, what was in the former case a momentary, becomes in the latter a permanent belief. Hence every thing has the appearance of reality; and the mere thoughts of the mind are virtually transformed into persons, and varieties of situation, and events, which are regarded by us in precisely in the same light as the persons, and situations, and events of our every day's experience.

§. 261. Apparent reality of dreams. (2d cause)

A second circumstance, which goes to account for the fact, that our dreaming conceptions have the appearance of reality is, that they are not susceptible of being controlled, either directly or indirectly, by mere volition.—We are so formed as almost invariably to associate reality with whatever objects of perception continue to produce in us the same effects. A hard or soft body, or any substance of a particular colour, or taste, or smell, are always, when presented to our senses, followed by certain states of mind essentially the same; and we yield the

and firm belief in the existence of such objects, we are disposed from our very constitution in the existence of objects of perception, some of which do not depend on the WILL, but tend to be followed by certain states of the mind whether we choose it or not.—But it is to be observed that our dreaming thoughts are mere conceptions being closed and shut up, and external objects being presented to them. This is true. But we are in favour of the real existence of objects in the world, because they produce in us ideas independent of our volitions, it is but natural to suppose, that we believe in the reality of our conceptions also, because they are in like manner beyond our voluntary control. They are both merely states of the mind ; and attention attends our perceptions, wherever we find them independent of our choice, there is no reason, to doubt of their reality, which are ideas of absent objects of perception, which would not be attended with a like belief under other circumstances.—And essentially the same circumstances exist in dreaming ; that is, a train of conceptions in the mind, and we are conscious of such a train, being unable to exercise any direction or control over them. They exist, whether we will it or not, and we regard them as real.

262. Of our estimate of time in dreaming.

Our estimate of time in dreaming differs from that in waking. Events, which would take whole days or a week in the performance, are dreamt in a few moments. Wonderful is this compression of a multitude of events into the very shortest period, that, when we are suddenly awakened by the jarring of a door, which opens into the room where we are sleeping, we sometimes find ourselves the victims of depredations by thieves, or of destruction by fire, in a very instant of our awaking.—Our dreams frequently go through all the particulars of a journey to the Alps, or of a military expedition to Moscow, or of circumnavigation of the globe, or of other long



and perilous undertakings, in a less number of hours than it took weeks, or months, or even years in the actual performance of them. We go from land to land and from city to city, and into desert places; we experience transitions from joy to sorrow, and from poverty to wealth; we are occupied in the scenes and transitions of many long months; and then our slumbers scattered, and, behold, they are the doings of a single watch of the night!

This striking circumstance in the history of our dreams is generally explained by supposing, that our thoughts, they successively occupy the mind, are more rapid, while we are awake. But their rapidity is at all times very great; so much so, that, in a few moments, crowded ideas pass through the mind, which it would take a long time to utter, and a far longer time would it take to perform all the transactions, which they concern. This explanation, therefore, is not satisfactory, for our thoughts are oftentimes equally rapid in our waking moments.

The true reason, we apprehend, is to be found in the preceding sections, which took under examination the apparent reality of dreams. Our conceptions in dreams are considered by us real; every thought is an action, every idea is an event; and successive states of mind are successive actions and successive events. He, who in sleep has the conception of all the particulars of a military expedition to Moscow, or of a circumnavigation of the globe, seems to himself to have actually experienced the various and multiplied fortunes of the one and the other. Hence what appears to be the real time in dreams but is only the apparent time, will be not that, which is sufficient for the mere thought, but that, which is necessary for the successive actions.

"Something perfectly analogous to this may be marked (says Mr. Stewart) in the perceptions we obtain by the sense of sight.\* When I look into a shallow where the deception is imperfect, I see only a set of plaubings of a few inches in diameter; but if the re-

\*Stewart's Elements, Chapter on Dreaming.

ation be executed with so much skill, as to convey to the idea of a distant prospect, every object before me in its dimensions, in proportion to the extent of space, which I conceive it to occupy, and what seemed before to be shut within the limits of a small wooden house, is magnified, in my apprehension, to an immense landscape of woods, rivers, and mountains."

§. 263. Of the senses sinking to sleep in succession.

It is true as a general statement, that in sleep the mind ceases to retain its customary power over the muscular movements of the system; and all the senses also at such times locked up, and no longer perform their usual offices. The effect upon the senses is such, that it seems to be proper to speak of them as individually going to sleep and awaking from sleep. It remains, therefore, to be observed, that there is some considerable reason to suppose, that the senses fall asleep in succession.—For a detailed explanation and proof of this singular fact, reference must be had to Cullen, and particularly to Cabanis, \* a French writer on subjects of this nature; but the conclusions, at which they arrive on this particular point, may be here stated.

The sight, in consequence of the protection of the eyelids, ceases to receive impressions first, while all the other senses preserve their sensibility entire; and may, therefore, be said to be first in falling asleep. The sense of taste, according to the above writers, is the next, which loses its susceptibility of impressions, and then the sense of smelling. The hearing is the next in order, and last of all comes the sense of touch.

Furthermore, the senses are thought to sleep with different degrees of profoundness. The senses of taste and smelling awake the last; the sight with more difficulty than the hearing, and the touch the easiest of all. Sometimes a very considerable noise does not awake a person, if the soles of his feet are tickled in the slightest degree, he starts up immediately.

\**Rapports du Physique et du Moral De L'Homme*, Mem. x.

Similar remarks are made by the writers above referred to, on the muscles. Those, which move the legs, cease to act, when sleep is approaching, so do those, which sustain the head: and the latter before which support the back.—And here it is proper to make an exception to the general statement at the commencement of this section, that the mind in sleep loses its power over the muscles. Some persons sleep standing, or walking, or riding on horseback: such we cannot well avoid the supposition, that the mind retains its power over the muscles in some way retained and exercised in sleep.—These statements are particularly important in connection with the facts of somnambulism, which only admit, that the susceptibility of the senses, and the power of the muscles may remain even in part while the person is asleep, and we can account for them. We know that this is not the case in a vast majority of instances, but that it does sometimes happen, is a point, which is at last to be sufficiently well established.

#### §: 264. Remarks on Somnambulists.

SOMNAMBULISTS are persons, who are capable of performing and other of voluntary actions while asleep. The facts in respect to them are these.—The senses are generally closed, and are not susceptible of being affected by outward objects, much the same as in ordinary sleep, with some slight exceptions, however, hereafter to be mentioned. Hence, the somnambulist walks, and performs voluntary actions without the use of vision; and in some cases he has his eyes open, but is still unable to see. Doing the works of day at unseasonable hours, he may be seen at his wood at midnight, or yokes his oxen, or goes to his work, and all the while is as profoundly asleep as an ordinary man; until he falls over some obstacle at which he awakes, or rides against a tree, or is in some other way brought to his recollection. He is not certain of walking in a straight line, but may sometimes be found on the roof of a house, or on the edge of precipices, but evidently with an imperfect sensibility to terror. He is a sort of automatic

that is carried about from place to place, but without feeling, vision, hearing, or other exercises of the senses; and still more without calculation, or any thing, which may be truly called reasoning; always excepting such calculation and reasoning as may be found in dreams.\*

Of such persons many instances are on record, and of some a particular account is given. The accompanying instance in the note will help to illustrate the above assertions, which, as a general statement, are sufficiently near the truth.—The explanation, which seems on the whole the most satisfactory, is this; viz. (1) The somnambulist is in all cases dreaming, and we may suppose in general, that the dream is one, which greatly interests him.

(2) Those volitions, which are a part of his dreams, retain their power over the muscles, which is not the fact in the sleep and the dreaming of the great body of people.

\* The following is an instance of somnambulism, which recently took place, of an extraordinary character.—A farmer in one of the counties of Massachusetts had employed himself, for some weeks in winter, thrashing his grain. One night as he was about closing his labours, he ascended a ladder to the top of the great beams in the barn, where the rye, which he was thrashing, was deposited, to ascertain what number of bundles remained unthrashed, which he determined to finish the next day. The ensuing night, about two o'clock, as was supposed, he was heard by one of the family to get up and go out. He repaired to his barn, being in sound sleep, and altogether unconscious of what he was doing, set open his barn doors, ascended the great beams of the barn where his rye was deposited, threw down a flooring, and commenced thrashing it. When he had completed it, he raked off the straw, and shoved the rye to one side of the floor, and then carried the straw up the ladder and deposited it on some rails, that lay across the great beams. He then threw down another flooring of rye, which he thrashed and finished as before. Thus he continued his labours until he had thrashed five floorings, and on returning from throwing down the sixth and last, in passing over part of the hay-mow, he fell off, where the hay had been cut down about six feet, on to the lower part of it, which awoke him. He at first imagined himself in his neighbour's barn, but after groping about in the dark for a long time, ascertained that he was in his own, and at length found the ladder, on which he descended to the floor, closed his barn doors, which he found open, and returned to his house. On coming to the light, he found himself in such a profuse perspiration, that his clothes were literally wet through. The next morning on going to his barn, he found that he had thrashed, during the night, five bushels of rye, had raked the straw off in good order, and deposited it on the great beams, and carefully shoved the grain to one side of the floor, without the least consciousness of what he was doing until he fell from the hay.

Consequently, whatever the somnambulist dreams is not only real in the mind, as in all other dreamers, but his ability to exercise his muscles enables him to give it a reality in action. Whether he dream of writing a letter, or of visiting a neighbour's house, or even of thrashing out his grain, his muscles are faithful to his vivid mental conceptions, which we may suppose in all cases closely connected with his customary labours and experiences, and carry him pretty safely through the operation, however sightless may be his eye, or dull his other senses.

Further ; We are not to forget here a remark on the sleep of the senses, already alluded to, and which is an exception to the general statement in regard to them. Both in somnambulism and in ordinary cases of dreaming the senses are not always entirely locked up ; many observations clearly show, that it is possible for the mind to be accessible through them, and that a new direction may be given in this way to a person's dreams without awaking him. Hence somnambulists may sometimes have very slight visual perceptions ; they may in some slight measure be guided by sensations of touch ; all the senses may be affected in a small degree by their appropriate objects, or this may be the case with some and not with others, without effectually disturbing their sleep.—These facts will be found to help in explaining any circumstances, which may be thought not to come within the reach of the general explanation above given.

## CHAPTER TWENTY THIRD.

### OF BELIEF AND EVIDENCE.

§. 265. Of truth and the different kinds of it.

**W**E enter now upon a series of topics of a somewhat different character from those, which have preceded ; the nature and grounds of belief, reasoning, truth, knowledge, and collateral subjects. With respect to what goes under the name of **TRUTH**, it must be confessed, although no word is more frequently upon the lips of men, there is no small difficulty in giving a definition or description of it, which will be acceptable to all. This term, however, when applied to objects of whatever kind, seems to be only another name for the existence of those objects, and of their qualities and relations, as they really are. Hence it is evident, that Truth is susceptible of the division, which has been made by some writers, into *necessary* and *contingent*.

Necessary Truths are such as are descriptive of those properties in objects, which always exist the same, and can neither be caused nor annulled by the will of any being whatever. The proposition, that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right ones, expresses a truth of this kind. Contingent Truths have relation to those things, which are not necessarily permanent. The proposition, that the world exists, expresses a truth of this description.

## §. 266. Of truth in relation to the human mind.

But the truth of things may exist, when there are no minds to contemplate it. The properties of a triangle were the same, before they were discovered, as after ; and the fact of the world's existence cannot be supposed ever to have depended upon the mere circumstance of its being known by men or not. Nevertheless, we apply the term under consideration to men, to their thoughts, reasonings, conclusions. We often say in reference to a person, that his statements are true, that his views are true, or that he has truth on his side. If then we inquire into the nature of Truth, considered relatively to the human intellect, we must say, It is the CONFORMITY of our thoughts or mental states to things, as they actually exist.

Agreeably to this definition, we may say of any propositions whatever, whether expressed in words or merely mental, that they are *true*, whenever they represent things, as they are. And, consequently, all are necessarily true or false, being either conformed or not conformed to the nature and state of things.—And hence the reasonableness of the saying, that truth does not always depend upon belief. The proposition, that redness is a quality inherent in a soldier's coat, is no doubt, firmly believed by many, but it is not true in the sense, in which it is generally understood to be so. We have already seen, that this and other colours are sensations in the mind, or at least involve such sensations. The belief, which people have in regard to it, does not affect the truth of the proposition itself. We may have false belief, since we may have false, or at least imperfect perceptions, false or pretended facts, and false testimony, which are among the grounds or antecedents of belief. But this subject is further to be considered.

## §. 267. Of the nature and degrees of belief.

BELIEF is the name of a simple idea, of a simple intellectual state, with which we become acquainted, in the phraseology of Mr. Locke, from REFLECTION ; that is, from internal observation, or what is otherwise call-

Not being a complex, but an uncompounded does not admit of definition ; although no one is to be ignorant, either of its existence, or of

As it is a simple idea, BELIEF is in its nature same ; but it admits of different degrees. We have these differences of strength in the feeling by that same internal consciousness, which assures the existence of the mere feeling itself. In other words, we are conscious of, or feel our belief to be sometimes, and at other times stronger.

These different degrees of this mental state, we give different names ; a low degree is termed PRESUMPTION ; a higher degree, PROBABILITY ; and the highest possible is termed CERTAINTY.

Now, certainty, is sometimes qualified by an epistemic of the antecedents of the state of mind, and thus denominate. Thus when it has resulted from demonstrative reasoning, (which will shortly be explained) is called DEMONSTRATIVE certainty ; when it is the result of a train of moral reasoning, it is termed MORAL certainty.—When the mind is in that state, denominated certainty, we are said to *know* the thing, to which that strong belief relates. So that knowledge and certainty are sometimes used as synonymous. But knowledge is ordinarily regarded and employed as a synonyme to certainty, when the latter term is used in relation to the moral ; because we find the highest possible belief is caused by imperfect or false evidence.

Of the grounds of belief or evidence in general.

The state of mind, which we call belief, is ordinarily caused by something, which is its cause. And the belief, being more or less strong according to the cause. The cause or ground of belief is known under the name of EVIDENCE, which signifies, (from the Latin EVIDENTIA,) clearness or manifest ; and hence by a common figure of speech is called *clearness*, which makes perspicuous, or therefore, (taking the term



in its widest or general sense,) is a general name for any thing, which is naturally fitted to affect our belief.

We here see, as in multitudes of other cases, the beautiful economy of our mental constitution. The human mind is, on the one hand, so framed, that it necessarily believes, when evidence is presented; and on the other, our Creator has so ordered things within and without, that there is no want of circumstances, which sustain an effective relation to the susceptibility of believing. If our Creator had not furnished the mind with the susceptibility of belief in its various degrees, and had not appointed certain things in the constitution of nature as antecedents or causes of these states of mind, it is evident, that man would have been lamentably defective in those principles of action, which constitute him a moral being. The more so, when we consider, that the various states of mind, to which we give the name of belief, are voluntary, and are necessary to it; and that volition is requisite, in the view of all, to a moral being. Belief and evidence, therefore, may both be considered as having their foundation in the constitution of our nature, and as giving to that constitution a harmony and a power of action, which it would not otherwise possess.

#### §. 200. Of the evidence of the senses.

One ground of belief, which continually controls our conviction, and through that our actions, is the evidence of the senses. It is in vain for us to attempt to release ourselves from the influence of what we hear, see, and touch. But it is not that our senses sometimes deceive us. Whether they deceive us or not, they certainly control our belief; and this is the point under consideration. But taken as a whole, and in their condition of mutual relationship and aid, it is not true, that they deceive us; provided always, they are in a sound and healthy state. When taken singly, without the assistances, to which they are entitled from comparing and judging susceptibilities of the mind, at times unquestionably give an imperfect, a defective (it can hardly be called, a false) view of things.

ere not designed to act independently of each other without aid from the mind ; and the charge of defective false information can be sustained only on that condition.

By means of the senses, we have the highest possible (that is to say, we have *certainty*,) of the existence of external objects. The conviction of their reality is not strong ; it may be said, if we may reason from men's assents, that it is universal. The belief of the internal objects and exercises, of which we are conscious, is not weaker. If we doubt in one case, the way is fairly open for doubt in both. And he, who doubts of the reality of the exercises of the soul, should, in order to be consistent, doubt of the existence of the soul itself. (See §. 18.)

D. Of internal observation or consciousness as a ground of belief.

When we turn our attention from the external to the internal world, from the mind as it is affected by matter to the mind as it is affected by its own operations ; we discover another source of evidence.—The notice, which the mind takes of its own operations, has already been mentioned as one source of knowledge ; and it requires little reflection to perceive, that whatever we know of our belief more or less. From the nature of the internal belief will vary with the extent of our knowledge.—Whenever the particulars, which we have treasured up, bear direct, or even remote relation to the subject under consideration. Hence INTERNAL OBSERVATION, (otherwise reflection or consciousness,) furnishes evidence, or is evidence itself. We often yield our assent to propositions, when all we can say, is, that we are inwardly assured of certain authoritative feelings, or that there is something within, which tells us to.—The soul of man, first brought into exercise by external objects, evolves from its various pos- sessions, as it perceives, feels, and judges, new perceptions, new feelings, new judgments ; as streams flow from inexhaustible fountains. All these have at times influence on, and control our belief.

§. 271. Of the form of internal observation, termed intuitive perceptions.

Among the other internal feelings, of which we are conscious, and which affect our belief, are those, which in common language are termed intuitive perceptions. This is the name given to those states of the mind, where there is an immediate feeling of the agreement or disagreement of two or more ideas without the intervention of a process of reasoning. For instance, three and three are six ; things equal to the same are equal to one another ; the whole is greater than a part. In these propositions and others like them, we at once feel by the mind, that there is an agreement between the ideas, or that what is expressed in the predicate agrees with what is expressed in the subject of the proposition. We do not learn it by a process of reasoning, but we know at once, that they agree, or are compatible with each other.

Under this head we ought perhaps to consider the intuitive belief, which we indulge in respect to the future. We believe, that the sun will rise and set tomorrow, as he does to-day ; we believe, that there will be a return of the seasons, and that the flower will bloom in spring and in autumn, as in times past. We constantly act on this intuitive belief, which we have in the continuance of the appearance and of the results of nature. And how is it to be explained ?

The explanation given by some, is, that it is owing to experience. But experience, as the word is used in the present case, is nothing more than an observation of facts, and of their conjunction or connection with each other. And hence, although experience may teach us the occasion of the feeling in question, it utterly fails to teach us the cause. We might know the fact, that certain things regularly precede and follow each other, without possessing the feeling, without believing in, or anticipating, that there would be a repetition of the same regularity of precedence and succession. Nevertheless we always exercise this feeling of anticipative belief ; it reaches and influences us in all our conduct, and all we can say in regard to it, is that it is intuitive. And this is much the same as to say

to say, that we have the feeling, that we are conscious of it, and that, in reference to the antecedents and consequents of the natural world, it arises promptly and unaided.

§. 272. Of memory as a ground of belief.

Another source of evidence is the memory.—In our transitions from place to place, and from scene to scene, we see and hear what will perhaps afterwards never come within the range of our experience. When we subsequently act upon what has thus been once under the examination of the senses, we rely upon the remembrance. So far as we are confident, that the original perceptions are correctly reported in the remembrance, the latter as decidedly controls our belief and actions, as if the original objects were present. This is the fact; and in confirmation of it we might safely appeal to the declarations and the conduct of the great body of mankind.—But what is the resolution of this confident reliance? What is the ground of it? The reply here as in other cases is, It is our nature, our mental constitution, the will and ordinance of the Being, who created us. “There must be, (says Campbell,) in human nature, some original grounds of belief, beyond which our researches cannot proceed, and of which, therefore, it is in vain to attempt a rational account.”\*—By these last expressions he must probably be understood to say, that we cannot account for or explain them by referring them to any principles more general or more deep in our nature. They are ultimate truths or facts, which we know; but in regard to which we have no further knowledge than of their existence. (See §. 19.)

§ 273. Of testimony or the observation of others as a source of evidence.

Another form of evidence is Testimony; by which is commonly understood the report of men concerning those things, which have fallen under the observation of their senses.—As to the fact, that we readily receive the testimony of our fellow beings as evidence, it is undeniable.

\* Campbell's Dissertation on Miracles in answer to Hume, Pt.

Without such confidence in what they assert, every one's knowledge of events and facts would be limited to those only, of which he himself had been a personal witness. In this case, no American, who has not been a traveller, can believe, that there is such a city as London; and no Englishman can believe, that there is such a city as Rome; and no person whatever has any ground for believing, that such men as Hannibal and Cæsar have ever existed.—But then it is to be remembered, that there is no natural connection between words and things, between the testimony, which is given, and the thing concerning which it is given. This being the case, it has often been asked, Upon what principle do we give credit to human testimony?—And the question certainly has a direct connection with the philosophy of the human mind, and deserves consideration.

§. 274. Of the origin of our belief in testimony.

Mr. Hume maintains, that our confidence in testimony is derived from no other principle, than our observation of the veracity of men, and of the usual conformity of facts to the reports of witnesses. In other words, he makes *experience* the foundation of our confidence or belief in testimony.—But there are two objections to this explanation, which are thought by many quite to overthrow his view of the subject.

The first is, that there are certain facts in the history of human nature, which do not agree with, or rather which contradict it.—Children, who have had but very little experience, give their assent to testimony, and the strength of their assent or belief will be the greater, the less removed they are from infancy. The credulity of children has almost passed into a proverb; youth surrenders its belief almost as readily; but manhood, which has seen more of the operation of the human passions, becomes cautious; and often the caution of manhood degenerates in old age into a suspicion and distrust of the worst kind.

What then becomes of the doctrine of Mr. Hume, that

confidence in testimony is the result of experience? One would think, if this be the course which things take, that the opposite of his statement is nearer the truth.

In the second place, the doctrine, that experience is the foundation of our belief in testimony, falls far short of explaining the whole amount of our belief from that source; as will appear from the following views.

Experience, as the term is ordinarily employed in reference to the present subject, is a personal observation of an agreement between the fact, and the statement, made respecting it. A certain thing is stated; the result or fact is found to agree with what is asserted; and, therefore, we are led to believe other statements. But it is undeniable, that we also believe many things, where we have not been favoured with personal experience of the veracity of the narrator. We believe in the existence of Constantinople, the river Niger, the Grand Lama, and of other cities, rivers, and men on the testimony of persons, whom we have never seen, and the conformity of whose words and actions we have had no opportunity to verify. So that taking the term experience in the more limited and appropriate sense, the explanation of Mr. Hume will not hold, because it falls short of the full extent of our belief.

If we use the term in a broader sense, to signify our knowledge of certain general principles of human nature, such, for instance, as that men are prone to utter the truth, the difficulty is still apparent and insuperable. How does any individual become acquainted with this general experience, this general knowledge of the characteristics of human nature? Undoubtedly it will be said by means of testimony.—Here we have an instance of that fallacy, which is called reasoning in a circle. We believe in multitudes of things from testimony in consequence of our experience in respect to mankind in general; we acquire this experience of mankind, since our personal acquaintance extends to but very few, from testimony; therefore, testimony is the foundation of testimo

§. 275. Confidence in testimony founded in an original tendency of our constitution.

We must, therefore, adopt some other explanation; and we cannot but think, there is good reason for supposing, that confidence in testimony has its foundation in an original tendency of our minds. Certainly the wise Author of our nature intended, men should live together in society. Consequently, he would give to them those mental tendencies, which are suitable and necessary in such a situation; such, for instance, as a disposition to speak the truth. And accordingly we find, that men are disposed to speak the truth, to convey, in their intercourse with others, their real sentiments. The telling of falsehoods is undoubtedly a violence to our natures, and the greatest liars tell the truth an hundred times, where they utter a falsehood once.—But it is no harder to believe, that we naturally credit testimony, or have a natural tendency of that sort, than that we naturally speak the truth. Indeed the latter tendency, or a disposition to speak truth, seems to require just such a counterpart in our constitution as the former, and without the one, the other would lose no small share of its fitness and worth. For surely a natural tendency to speak the truth would be very near superfluous, if there were not in our nature something corresponding, which should lead us to yield, to what we hear, a ready and confiding assent.—In answer, therefore, to the inquiry, What is the foundation of our belief in testimony? We reply in short, that we are naturally led, or are led by the principles of our mental constitution, not only to speak the truth, but to yield a ready assent to what we hear spoken, or to testimony.

Furthermore, this original tendency to believe in testimony is weakened in most cases, as we have great reason to think, the further we advance in life. At first we yield our assent without any hesitation; to doubt is unnatural and when we are compelled to do it, it is no small trial to our feelings. But no one lives long and mingles much with men, without being deceived many times. We less by degrees the wide influence of interested motives; and

from falling in with Mr. Hume's hypothesis, we have no reason for saying, that experience leads us to disbelieve where nature would prompt us to believe.

§. 276. Of reasoning as a ground of belief.

But there remains to be mentioned another prominent mode, in which our belief is both caused and controlled, by means of reasoning.—The definition commonly given of reasoning, is, That it is a mental process, by means of which we infer unknown truths from those, which are already known or admitted.

In order to reasoning, therefore, there must be a number of perceptions, facts, or truths given; which we may suppose to exist, either mentally or verbally, in the form of propositions. These propositions are compared together, that is, are successively considered by the mind. In this way, various new feelings arise, until we arrive at the conclusion. The conclusion, at which we arrive in completing this process, is nothing more than a feeling, a new mode of the mind. It is a feeling, nevertheless, which could not have existed without the preceding steps; but, having once arisen, controls more or less according to circumstances the belief of men, and through that, their actions.—These are among the principal grounds of belief; (1) The Senses, (2) Internal Observation or consciousness, (3) The Memory, (4) Testimony, (5) Reasoning.



## CHAPTER TWENTY FOUR.

### EVIDENCE OF TESTIMONY.

§. 277. Of the importance of the evidence of testimony and of its perversions.

**O**F the subjects introduced into the preceding chapter, that of the EVIDENCE OF TESTIMONY possesses peculiar importance. Although every person possesses a fund of evidence in himself, independently of that of testimony, he is confessedly restricted as to other grounds of belief by the limits of his mere personal experience. What by means of the evidence of testimony, he is able to command upon, and command the experience of the whole of mankind.

But the importance of this form of evidence does not depend merely upon its extent. It not only has the power of influencing our conduct in all our ordinary concerns, but is constantly appealed to, in courts of justice, and in the most serious and weighty transactions. Individuals are frequently required to give testimony, which involves their interests, their reputation, property, and life of their families. But it cannot be denied, although we are led by the natural and original impulse of our nature to give testimony, that it is from various causes liable to be complicated and perverted. A perversion of it may be effected without necessarily implying any evil in the part of the person, who testifies.

chiefly to prosecute this subject, and to point out some of the causes of mistake from this source, and also their remedies.

§. 278. Of the competency of the person who testifies.

Before speaking of those circumstances, which perplex the jury by giving a wrong bias to the judgment, a prior inquiry is to be made as to the competency of the witness to form an opinion on that subject, to which his testimony relates. Witnesses sometimes labour under a natural incapacity of seeing, which necessarily annuls their testimony. A person who is deprived of the sense of hearing, is not capable of testifying to the oral assertions of others; and a deaf man cannot give testimony on subjects, the knowledge of which necessarily implies the existence of the sense of seeing. The competency of the narrator, therefore, to judge in respect to that subject, on which his testimony is given, is very justly to be examined into.

And in the question of competency, we may not only enquire into the capacity, or want of it in the witness; but may further inquire into his opportunities of exercising his capacity, which he is acknowledged to possess. If a witness testifies, that he saw an object or action, when circumstances positively show, that he had no opportunity of seeing, his testimony is as much invalidated, as if he were deaf under a natural incapacity of sight. If, for instance, it be necessarily implied in what he says, that he was in a particular place, but on inquiry circumstances positively show, that he was not there, then evidently he had no opportunity of knowing what he testifies, and his declarations are to be set aside.

§. 279. Of habits of veracity in connection with testimony.

People can hardly expect to hear the truth from those, who are in the practice of uttering falsehoods; and it is, therefore, proper to inquire, What are the witness' character and habits in this respect?—Of professed liars, we have nothing to say. Of persons, who are in the habit of telling the truth, and whose habits are ac-

known to be those of veracity, a distinction is made between two classes.

(1) Some men are, in principle and in practice, truthful. They have so long and so steadily exhibited this trait, that it seems to be inherent, something in the constitution. Persons of this character are found to be what is called averse to stating what has not come within their personal observation and knowledge. When repeating the assertions of others, they do not incline to credit their authority, but are desirous that it should be kept and would not, on any consideration, convey a wrong impression. This is their general character, although there is a difference among individuals of this class, and some are found to be less particular in their ordinary assertions and in more serious testimony, than others.

(2) There is a second class of persons, who would esteem themselves injured in having their veracity questioned, but who have formed habits, which render it necessary that their testimony should be carefully examined. We allude particularly to the habit, which some have of telling extraordinary stories, or anecdotes of whatever kind, which are intended, and are calculated to interest. They consider themselves in a measure pledged to the interest, which they know to be excited on the part of those present, and are, therefore, under an extraordinary temptation to enliven and embellish their narrative. Any circumstances have escaped their memory, which were essential to the unity of the story, their own imagination is taxed to furnish them, since it is too late to stop for, and of too much consequence to omit them. They become in time not a little insensible to the false coloring, which they give to their statements, and convey erroneous impressions, without being conscious of an intention to deceive.—Such persons, when called upon to testify on oath, will be likely to give a false colouring to the most serious statements, similar to that, which he gives in his discourses to their fire-side hearers. We would not say, that they intentionally do this. But those, who are acquainted with the power of habit, will readily in-

ine the possibility of their thus doing, without its being implied, that they are designedly untrue.

§. 280. Of the influence of friendship, &c., on testimony.

Friendship is generally founded on our favourable opinion of the good qualities of those, towards whom we have friendly feelings. In the ordinary course of things, no one can be expected to cherish the feelings of friendship towards a person, whom he knows to be a knave, or a hypocrite, or in any other respects essentially bad. Whenever a witness, therefore, is called upon to give testimony unfavourable to the case of a friend, he will find, on a little examination of himself, that his testimony is modified by his own previous feelings and opinions. This modification of our testimony, or rather of the belief and experience, on which our testimony is founded, is often effected with great rapidity, and in almost all cases by a process, to which we yield very slight attention.

Although our own eyes have been the witnesses, we can hardly suspect one, to whom we had ascribed so many good qualities, of committing a crime. We suppose, that we ourselves may be mistaken, and are led, both in consequence of our own supposed liability to mistake, and in consequence of our previous convictions of the criminated person's goodness, to give his conduct the most favourable construction.—The testimony, therefore, although given under the most solemn circumstances, will sometimes correspond to this very favourable mental construction, which has been previously formed, and of which we ourselves are in a measure insensible.

Such testimony may be critically examined, and without any necessary impeachment of the witness' integrity. If friendship have secretly taken away any thing from the truth, it is the part of all, especially of those, who are professedly the investigators of truth, to see, that it is demanded back again.—The same views will hold, where dislike exists. It has an equal degree of influence in perplexing and prejudicing testimony, with personal friend-

## §. 281. Influence of personal interest on testimony.

The love of gain is a passion, which is greatly nourished by many circumstances in our situation. As riches not only deliver their possessors from many inconveniences, incident to a want of them ; but are supposed to secure influence and respect, we find one reason in these effects of it, why this passion has taken so deep root in the minds of men. The love of aggrandizement, and the other modifications of selfism, are not stronger, than the passion for wealth. But it is the tendency and result of interested feelings of every description to present whatever concerns ourselves in the happiest light, and to heap up arguments in our own favour ; and on the other hand, to prevent our bestowing due attention or ordinary justice upon the concerns of others.

In all cases, therefore, where the private emolument of the person, who gives testimony, is concerned, there are two claims ; that of interest on the one side, and that of truth on the other.—The claims of one's own interest, which are so near his feelings, are carefully examined, and every circumstance, which could have an influence to make him act in accordance with that interest, has its full weight. While, on the other hand, we feel an indescribable reluctance to examine claims, which we anticipate will be against ourselves ; and ignorance becomes to us, under these circumstances, a source of satisfaction.

Persons, who are placed in this situation, ought carefully to guard against the powerful and sometimes imperceptible influence, which is exerted over them ; an influence, which is often pernicious to their understandings, and still more so to virtue.—Those, who hear and receive the testimony of persons interested, cannot do justice to the person or subject, which this testimony concerns, without making suitable allowance for the misrepresentations, which are found to arise from this source.

## §. 282. Of the influence on testimony of a spirit of partisanship.

There are parties in religion, parties in politics, parties in neighbourhoods and families ; nor indeed do we

find an entire exemption from them in any situation in life. The feelings of partisanship, which are renewed at every meeting of our opposers, and at the knowledge of every circumstance, calculated to remind us of the existence of a controversy, are exceedingly strong. Hence the prejudices of parties, which are opinions, modified by these feelings, are tenacious, and conversions from one party to another are few.

It is a remark somewhere made by Hume, that the suspicion of a person's being your enemy is one step towards making him such. Generally speaking, partisans have strong suspicions of those of the opposite denomination, and hence it is natural to expect, that there will be much of an inimical spirit. And every one knows, how difficult is a fair and candid statement of the concerns of those, whom we suspect to be hostile, or approaching to enmity. Under the influence of this bias, those who give testimony may be expected to seize upon circumstances, unfavourable to their adversaries, and to throw other circumstances of a different character into the back ground; and yet profess themselves unconscious of a premeditated design to do injustice.

§. 283. Of the memory in connection with testimony.

The great majority of persons have sometimes occasion to complain of treachery of the memory. Although we confidently rely on what we truly remember, (§. §. 19, 272,) it is not meant to be said, nor is it true, that the memory is not liable to mistakes. Facts, which happened some considerable time previous to the testimony given, may not be perfectly recollected.—Hence it becomes necessary in listening to a narrator to inquire into his competency in this respect.

I. In making this inquiry, we may be directed in part by the nature of the subject, to which the testimony relates. If the statements, which are made concern words or a discourse spoken, which are peculiarly evanescent, there is a greater probability than in respect to statements, that the witness may not perfectly re-

II. We may also be aided in regard to this subject by inquiring, Whether the narrator employed any means to assist his memory? We rightly conclude, that the statement of the circumstances of a past event will possess increased accuracy, when it appears, that the person has used means with that view, such as writing it down, or frequently recalling and repeating it.

III. There may also be various incidental circumstances, occurring at the time of hearing the assertions of the witness or narrator, which will help in forming an opinion of his powers of recollection, but which cannot well be specified here.—Our opinion of the narrator's memory, from whatever views or circumstances it may arise, is justly entitled to modify our confidence in his declarations.

§. 284. Influence of the possibility of a confutation on testimony.

The distinction between virtue and vice has its foundation in the original constitution of things, but men exercise the right, depending partly on their own susceptibility of judging, and partly on the information of the Scriptures, of saying what things belong to the class of virtue, and what belong to that of vice. Those actions, which are justly accounted vicious, are universally esteemed worthy of blame; while actions, which are truly assigned to the class of virtue, are as generally considered praiseworthy.

The man, therefore, who commits what the community unite in deeming a crime, forfeits his reputation; he turns upon himself the eye of scorn and derision; and becomes, more or less, according to the degree of his offence, a 'hissing and a byword.'

Whenever a person utters false testimony, which is reckoned a crime of a very high description, he does it, knowing well the consequences, if a want of veracity should be detected. He will be likely, therefore, to inform himself well of the nature of the subject, on which he testifies, and of the circumstances, under which the testimony is to be given; and if there be a prospect of the false testimony admitting an easy confutation, he will be

ly cautious, how he utters such testimony.—This then may be laid down; Whenever such circumstance, that false testimony may very probably be conceded and confuted, there is a corresponding diminution of probability, that any such false testimony will be true.

§. 285. On the testimony of the dying.

It may not be considered irrelevant to the general subject to offer some remarks on the testimony of those, who are thought to be near the period of their departure from this world. Such are generally supposed to utter themselves with a peculiar regard to the truth. It is supposed, that the nearness of the future world, connected, as it is, with a diminution of the influence of the present, operates upon them with the power of the most efficient motives, and that, under such circumstances, they will not be guilty of falsehood.—Great weight is undoubtedly to be given to the asseverations of a dying man, who is in the perfect exercise of his reasoning powers; but then our readiness to give credit to them must be regulated by circumstances.

If we make the supposition of the case of a person, condemned to death by the civil laws, the remarks, applicable to such a case, will suggest considerations, applicable to ordinary cases of death.—Let it be supposed, therefore, that a person is condemned to death, that he is about to be executed for some crime, but that he asserts his innocence to the last.

1) The first circumstance to be considered here is, whether eternal things have any real influence upon him, and whether he looks upon death, as about to introduce him into the presence of God. If this be not the case, and if the day of judgment have no terrors, his assertions are no more to be believed, than the assertions he makes before condemnation. It is generally supposed, that a dying man utters truth, in consequence of the operation upon him of motives drawn from eternity. But this supposition



sition, under the circumstances now specified, cannot be admitted.

(2) It is to be considered again, whether the criminal have not some lingering hope of pardon. He knows it to be possible for this pardon to come, although it should be only an hour before the time of execution. To make confession, therefore, may be the means of destroying that life, to which he fondly clings; and hence, if he be guilty, he here finds a strong motive to persevere in his assertions.

(3) There is a third circumstance also to be remembered.—It is sometimes the case, that men, who have been left to commit the greatest crimes, have within them, notwithstanding the commission of such crimes, the remains of truth, honour, and feeling. It does not necessarily follow, because a man has committed those criminal acts, which justice demands, that he should suffer the severest punishment, that he never has moments of contrition, or aspirations after better things. A person may betray a friend and murder him, and yet, while in the possession of this dreadful obliquity of feeling, may retain the most sincere and devoted attachment to his wife and children. Without having the least expectation of living, he, nevertheless, violently and constantly avers his innocence; an honourable passion yet secures a residence in his conscience; and he fears a confession may bring a disgrace on his family and descendants, which a denial may possibly avert.

(4) And then there is the additional circumstance of his own reputation.—The love of fame has sometimes been spoken of, as ‘the infirmity of noble minds’; and it can be truly said, that vicious and ignoble minds share the same species of infirmity. It will be found to have made its way into the hearts of thieves, robbers, assassins. The man, who has been bad enough to commit a crime, may, therefore, have vanity enough to prompt him to tempt, just as he is leaving the world, an imposition on the sympathizing feelings of the multitude. And it is a gratification to his self-love, to think, that, at such a

can cheat those into a good opinion of himself, or cause tears from them, whom he would not have hesitated in former days, nor at that very time, if it were possible, to do or to murder.

We ought not, therefore, to be too confident, that the testimony of the dying is to be always depended on. And yet, notwithstanding these exceptions and cautions, it would be pushing our ill opinion of human nature to an unwarrantable length, to suspect, in all or even in a major-  
of cases, the testimony given at the period of death.

§. 286. On the credibility of historical accounts.

Of the many errors, which doubtless exist in the great-part of historical narrations, some are owing to the carelessness, and some to the prejudices of the writer. The great majority of them may perhaps be traced to these two causes, to want of care, and to feelings, influenced by prejudice. These are points, therefore, of great importance to be ascertained.

(1) We may be aided in forming an opinion, whether the writer was, or was not sufficiently disposed to be exact, by considering the circumstances, in which he wrote.

If the narration at the time of its publication was calculated to excite peculiar interest, and if untrue, to cause contradiction, it may reasonably be supposed, that the care and scrupulosity of the writer will be proportioned to his exposure to examination and to rebuke for any erroneous presentations. His own interest, (if we were deprived of any other assurance of correctness in his statements,) in such case a pledge, that he will not make statements without the ability to support them.

Hence we may see, how much credit is due to the writers of the New Testament. They stated facts, in respect to which a very great interest was felt; their narrations were undoubtedly very carefully examined, and as the writers were capable of the readiest contradiction or contradiction, the prevailing disposition to confute them would have availed itself of the first opportunity to do it, if there

had been any untruth. What writer, for instance, have hazarded his reputation on the assertion, that thousands were miraculously supplied by means of loaves of bread, had he not been satisfied of the correctness of the statement? Such a statement could have at once exposed, and the consequent folly of the writer it had not been true.—We justly think, that was good reason to admit the general truth of the narrative of Livy, of Xenophon, and of other Greek and Roman writers; but there are weightier and more imperious reasons, why we should yield our assent to the sacred

(2) Admitting the historian to have been sufficiently laborious and careful, we are next to take into consideration the prejudices, to which he may have been exposed. The character, which, Livy, the Roman Historian, gave Hannibal, is, that he was a man of great cruelty, perjured and untrue, without any fear of the gods, without regard to his oath, and without feelings of religion; *MANA CRUELITAS, PERFIDIA PLUSQUAM PUNICA, NIHIL NIHI SANCTI, NULLUS DEUM METUS, NULLUM JUS JURIS, NULLA RELIGIO.*) But there is reason to believe, that the writer speaks in this instance rather with the feelings of a prejudiced Roman, than with that impartiality and candor, which may justly be expected from history. If Hannibal had been born a Roman, possessing and enjoying, nevertheless, the same traits of character, should not probably have received a different account? Or if the Carthaginians had furnished native historians of the battles, would there not have been, (and perhaps justly,) more credit given to their own nation, and more evidences of perfidy and deception?—It is said of Montesquieu, that it was victory only, which decided whether we ought to say, the Punic, or the Roman.

Among the men, who have obtained great warlike fame on this side of the Atlantic, hardly any name is more frequently mentioned and with greater emotion than that of the conqueror of Quebec. No one can read his memoirs of his expedition up the heights of Abraham, and the

conflict of the ensuing day, without the profound acknowledgment of the heart to the intrepidity and valour of the English general. How often and how enthusiastically has his glory been celebrated !

But a comparative silence and dishonour rest upon the name of the Marquis de Montcalm, who fell on the same field of battle, the worthy rival of Wolfe. And yet he was no less brave, no less generous, no less devoted to his country and his king. The remark of Montesquieu will apply here ; It was victory, which made the difference. Had the French general conquered, Montcalm would have been the hero, Wolfe would have been blamed for his rashness.

**NOTE.** Numerous writers have treated of the subjects of this, and the preceding chapter. Among others the following ; Locke on Human Understanding, Bk. IV. ; Buffier, First Truths, Pt. I, chs. xiv—xxiv. ; Butler's *Analogy*, INTRODUCTION ; Condillac's *Logic*, Pt. II, ch. ix. ; Ditton's Discourse concerning the Resurrection, Pt. I. ; Beattie on Truth ; Gambier's *Moral Evidence* ; Hume and Campbell on Miracles ; Stewart, *Elements*, 2d vol. chs. I, II. ; Reid, *Essays on the Intellectual Powers*, VI. ; Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, (Pt. II. ch. II. §. 3. Vom Meinen, Wissen, und Glauben.)

## CHAPTER TWENTY FIFTH.

### DEMONSTRATIVE REASONING.

§. 287. Definition of propositions and kinds of them.

**R**EASONING, which has already been mentioned as one of the grounds of belief, requires a further consideration. But before we can enter with advantage on this subject, it is necessary to go into a brief explanation of propositions, which are the subordinate parts in every process of that kind.—A PROPOSITION has been defined to be a verbal representation of some perception, act, or affection of the mind.—Mr. Locke also speaks of mental propositions, or those states of mind, where two or more ideas are combined together, previous to their being embodied and set forth in language.

The parts of a proposition are,—(1) The SUBJECT, or that, concerning which something is either asserted, or denied, commanded, or inquired ;—(2) The PREDICATE, or that, which is asserted, denied, commanded, or inquired concerning the subject ;—(3) The COPULA, by which the two other parts are connected.—In these two propositions,

Cæsar was brave,

Men are fallible,

*Men* and *Cæsar* are the subjects ; *fallible* and *brave* are the predicates ; *are* and *was* are the copulas.

Propositions have been divided,—(1) Into SIMPLE or those, whose subject and predicate are composed of single words, as in this,

Benevolence is commendable ;

2) Into **COMPLEX**, or those, where the subject and predicate consist of a number of words, as in this,  
 faithfulness in religion is followed by peace of mind ;

3) Into **MODAL**, where the copula is qualified by some word or words, representing the manner or possibility of agreement or discrepancy between the subject and predicate, as in these,

Men of learning *can* exert influence ;

Wars *may* sometimes be just.

**PROPOSITIONS**, more or less involved, are necessary parts of every process of reasoning. They may be compared to separate and disjointed blocks of marble, which are ordered to enter into the formation of some edifice. The completed process of reasoning is the edifice ; the propositions are the materials.

288. Of the process of the mind in all cases of reasoning.

Leaving the consideration of its subordinate parts or elements, we are first to consider the general nature of reasoning ; in other words, we are to examine the character of the mental process. The definition given of reasoning, it will be remembered, was, That it is the mental process, by which unknown truths are deduced from such as are known, or are taken for granted. Hence there will necessarily be in every such process a succession of propositions. Indeed they follow each other with so much clarity, that we are apt to consider the arrangement of them as entirely arbitrary. But this is a mistaken supposition. It is true, when a number of ideas are presented together at the same time, the mind puts forth a volition, or exercises choice, in selecting one idea in preference to another. But the ideas, from which the choice is made, without the presence of which it could not be made, are not caused by volition, and, therefore, mere arbitrary notions ; but are suggested by the laws of association. As an illustration we will suppose an argument on the expediency and expediency of capital punishments in ordinary cases. The disputant first denies in general terms the propriety of such social combinations have assumed of capital

tally punishing offences of a slight nature. But before considering the cases he has particularly in view, he remarks on the right of capital punishment for murder; and admits, that the principle of self defence gives such a right. He then takes up the case of stealing, and contends, that we have no right to punish the thief with death, because no such right is given by the laws of nature; for, before the formation of the civil compact, the institution of property was not known. He then considers the nature of civil society, and contends, that, in the formation of the social compact, no such extraordinary power, as that of putting to death for stealing or other crimes of similar aggravation, could have been implied in that compact, because it never was possessed by those, who formed it; &c.

Here is an argument, made up of a number of propositions, and carried on, as may be supposed, to very considerable length. And in this argument, as in all others, every proposition is, in the first instance, suggested by the laws of association; it is not at all a matter of arbitrary volition. The disputant first states the inquiry in general terms; he then considers the particular case of murder; the crime of theft is next considered; and this is examined, first, in reference to natural law, and, afterwards, in reference to civil law.—And this consecution of propositions takes place precisely the same, as when the sight of a stranger in the crowd suggests the image of an old friend, and the friend suggests the village of his residence, and the village suggests an ancient ruin in its neighbourhood, and the ruin suggests heroes and battles of other days.—It is true, that other propositions may have been suggested at the same time, and the disputant may have had his choice between them, but this was all the direct power, which he possessed; and even that in strictness of speech can hardly be called direct. (See §. 213.)

§. 289. Grounds of the selection of propositions.

A number of propositions are presented to the mind by the principles of association; the person, who carries on the process of reasoning, makes his selection among

a. But it is reasonable to inquire, How it happens, there is such a suitableness or agreement in the propositions, as they are successively adopted into the train of reasoning? And this seems to be no other than to inquire into the circumstances, under which the choice of a subject is made, or the grounds of the selection.

Let it be considered, then, that in all arguments, whether moral or demonstrative, there is some general subject, which the evidence is made to bear; there is some point in particular to be examined. In reference to these general outlines, we have a prevailing and permanent desire. This desire is not only a great help in giving quickness and strength to the laws of association; but exercises also a very considerable indirect influence in giving an appropriate character to the thoughts, which are suggested by those laws. Hence the great body of the positions, which are at such times brought up, will be found to have a greater or less reference to the general subject. These are all very rapidly compared by the mind with those outlines, in regard to which its feelings of desire are exercised, or with what we usually term *the point to be proved*.—Here the mind, in the exercise of that susceptibility of feelings of relation, which we have already seen it to possess, immediately discovers the suitableness or want of suitableness, the agreement or want of agreement of the propositions presented to it, to the general subject. This perception of suitableness, which is one of those relative feelings, of which the mind is from its very nature held to be susceptible, exists as an ultimate fact in the mental constitution. All, that can profitably be said in relation to it, is the mere statement of the fact; and of the circumstances, under which it is found to exist.—Those positions, which are judged by the mind, in the exercise of that capacity which its Creator has given it, to be agreeable to the general subject or point to be proved, are permitted by it to enter in, as continuous parts of the argument. And in this way a series of propositions rises up, all having reference to one ultimate purpose, regular, appropriate, and in their issue laying the foundation of the



different degrees of assent.—This explanation will apply not only to the supposed argument in the last section, which is an instance of moral reasoning, but will hold good essentially of all other instances of whatever kind. The difference in the various kinds of reasoning consists in the mental process, than in the nature of the subject compared together, and in the conditions attending the

§. 290. Of the subjects of demonstrative reasoning.

In order to have a full view of this subject, it is necessary to examine it, under the two prominent heads of Moral and Demonstrative.—DEMONSTRATIVE reasoning differs from any other species of reasoning in the subjects, about which it is employed. The subjects are abstract ideas, and the necessary relations among them. Those ideas or thoughts are called abstract, which are representative of such qualities and properties in objects as can be distinctly examined by the mind separate from other qualities and properties, with which they are commonly united. And these may be reckoned, as coming within this class of subjects, the properties of numbers and of geometrical figures; extension, duration, weight, velocity, forces, &c., so far as they are susceptible of being accurately expressed by numbers, or other mathematical signs. But the subjects of moral reasoning, upon which we are to remark here more particularly, are matters of fact, including their connection with other facts, whether constant or variable, and all attendant circumstances.—That the exterior angle of a triangle is equal to both the interior and opposite angles, is a truth, which comes within the province of demonstration. That Homer was the author of the *Iliad*, Xerxes invaded Greece, &c. are inquiries, belonging to moral reasoning.

§. 291. Use of definitions and axioms in demonstrative reasoning.

In every process of reasoning there must be a commencement of it something to be proved; there must also be some things either known, or taken for granted, such, with which the comparison of the proposition

1. The preliminary truths in demonstrative reasonings involved in such definitions as are found in all mathematical treatises. It is impossible to give a demonstration of the properties of a circle, parabola, ellipse, or other geometrical figure, without first having given a definition of them. DEFINITIONS, therefore, are the facts assumed as the FIRST PRINCIPLES in demonstrative reasoning, from which by means of the subsequent steps the conclusion is derived.—We find something entirely similar in respect to subjects, which admit of the application of a different mode of reasoning. Thus in Natural Philosophy, the general facts in relation to the gravity and elasticity of the air may be considered as first principles. From these principles in Physics are deduced, as consequences, the suspension of the mercury in the barometer, and its fall, when tied up to an eminence.

We must not forget here the use of axioms in the demonstrations of mathematics. Axioms are certain self-evident propositions, or propositions, the truth of which is discovered by intuition, such as the following; "Things equal to the same, are equal to one another;" "From equals take away equals, and equals remain." We generally find a number of them prefixed to treatises of geometry; and it has been a mistaken supposition, which has long prevailed, that they are at the foundation of geometrical, and of all demonstrative reasoning. But axioms, taken by themselves, lead to no conclusions. With their assistance alone, it cannot be denied, that the truth, involved in propositions susceptible of demonstration, would have been beyond our reach.

But axioms are by no means without their use, although their nature may have been misunderstood. They are properly and originally intuitive perceptions of the truth, and whether they be expressed in words, as we generally do them, or not, is of but little consequence, except as a matter of convenience to beginners, and in giving instruction. But those intuitive perceptions, which are always relied on in them, are essential helps; and if by their aid we should be unable to complete a demonstration,

we should be equally unable without them. We begin with definitions; we compare together successively a number of propositions; and these intuitive perceptions of their agreement or disagreement, to which, when reduced in words, we give the name of axioms, attend every step.

§. 292. The opposites of demonstrative reasonings about

In demonstrations we consider only one side of a question; it is not necessary to do any thing more than to affirm or deny. The first principles in the reasoning are given; they are not only supposed to be certain, but they are as such; these are followed by a number of propositions in succession, all of which are compared together; if the conclusion be a demonstrative one, then there has been a clear perception of certainty at every step in the reasoning. Whatever may be urged against an argument thus conducted is of no consequence; the opposite of it in all ways imply some fallacy. Thus, the proposition, that the three angles of a triangle are not equal to two right angles, and other propositions, which are the opposite of what has been demonstrated, will always be found to be false, and also to involve an absurdity; that is, are inconsistent and contradictory to themselves. Nothing more is wanted to confirm this, than a careful examination of the propositions.

§. 293. Demonstrative reasonings do not admit of different degrees of belief.

When our thoughts are employed upon subjects, which come within the province of moral reasoning, we yield different degrees of assent; we form opinions more or less probable. It is different in demonstrations; the assent which we yield, is at all times of the highest kind, and never susceptible of being regarded, as more or less certain. In short, all demonstrations are certain. But a question arises, What is certainty? (See §. 267.) And what in particular do we understand by that certainty which is ascribed to the conclusions, to which we are thus conducted in any process of demonstrative reasoning?

## §. 294. Of the nature of demonstrative certainty.

In proceeding to answer this inquiry, it is again to be observed, that, in demonstrative reasonings, we always begin with certain first principles or truths, either known, or for granted; and these hold the first place, or are the foundation of that series of propositions, over which the mind successively passes, until it rests in the conclusion.

In mathematics the first principles, of which we speak, are the definitions.—We begin, therefore, with what is acknowledged by all to be true or certain. At every step there is an intuitive perception of the agreement or disagreement of the propositions, which are compared together. Consequently, however far we may advance in the comparison of them, there is no possibility of falling short of that degree of assent, with which, it is acknowledged, that the series commenced. So that demonstrative certainty may be judged to amount to this;—Whenever we are at the last step or the conclusion of a series of propositions, the mind in effect intuitively perceives the relation, whether it be the agreement or disagreement, coincidence or want of coincidence, between the last step or conclusion, and the conditions involved in the propositions at the commencement of the series; and, therefore, demonstrative certainty is virtually the same as the certainty of intuition. Although it arises on a different occasion, and is, therefore, entitled to a separate consideration, there is no difference in the degree of the belief.

## §. 295. Of the use of diagrams in demonstrations.

Mr. Locke has advanced the opinion, that moral subjects are no less susceptible of demonstration, than mathematical. However this may be, we are certainly more frequently required to practice this species of reasoning in mathematics, than any where else; and in conducting the process, nothing is more common, than to make use of various kinds of figures or diagrams.—The proper use of diagrams, of a square, circle, triangle, or other figure, which we delineate before our mind in keeping its ideas distinct, and then we refer to them to

gether with readiness and correctness. They are a sort of auxiliaries, brought into the help of our intellectual infirmities, but are not absolutely necessary ; since demonstrative reasoning, wherever it may be found, resembles any other kind of reasoning in this most important respect, viz. in being a comparison of our ideas.—In proof that artificial diagrams are only auxiliaries, and are not essentially necessary in demonstrations, it may be remarked, that they are necessarily all of them imperfect, owing to the imperfection of our senses. Our reasonings, therefore, and our conclusions will not apply to the figures before us, but merely to an imagined perfect figure. And a verbal statement of the properties of this imagined perfect figure is what we understand by a DEFINITION, the use of which in this kind of reasoning in particular has already been mentioned.

§. 296. Of signs in general as connected with reasoning.

The statements in the last section will appear the less exceptionable, when it is recollected, that in all cases reasoning is purely a mental process. From beginning to end, it is a succession of feelings. Neither mathematical signs, nor words constitute the process, but are only its attendants and auxiliaries. We can reason without diagrams or other signs employed in mathematics, the same as an infant reasons, before it has learnt artificial language.

When the infant has once put his finger in the fire, he avoids the repetition of the experiment, reasoning in this way, that there is a resemblance between one flame and another, and that what has once caused him pain, will be likely under the same circumstances to cause the same sensation. When the infant sees before him some glittering toy, he reaches his hand towards it, and is evidently induced to do so by a thought of this kind, that the acquisition of the object will soon follow the effort of the hand, as it has a similar effort previously made.—Here is reasoning without words ; it is purely internal ; nevertheless no one will presume to say, that words are not great helps in reasoning. And thus in demonstrative reasoning, al-

though diagrams, and numerical and algebraic signs are assistances, they do not constitute the process; nor can it be even said, that they are indispensably essential to it.

§. 297. Of the influence of demonstrative reasoning on the mental character.

A considerable skill in demonstrative reasoning is on a number of accounts desirable, although it cannot be denied, that very frequent practice and great readiness in it is not always favourable; so that it seems proper briefly to mention the effects, both propitious and unpropitious, on the mental character.—(1) A frequency of practice in demonstrative reasoning greatly aids in giving one a ready command of his attention.—In this species of reasoning, the propositions follow each other in such regular order and so closely, and so great is the importance of perceiving the agreement or disagreement of each succeeding one with that, which goes before; that a careless, infixed, and dissipated state of the mind seems to be utterly inconsistent with carrying on such a process with any sort of success to the conclusion. As, therefore, the strictest attention is here so highly necessary, the more a person subjects himself to this discipline, the more ready and efficient will be the particular application of the mind, to which we give that name. And we often find distinguished individuals in political life and in the practice of the law, who are desirous of holding their mental powers in the most prompt and systematic obedience, imposing on themselves exercises in geometry and algebra for this purpose.

(2) This mode of reasoning accustoms one to care and discrimination in the examination of subjects.—In all discussions, where the object is to find out the truth, it is necessary to take asunder all the parts, having relation to the general subject, and bestow upon them a share of our consideration. And in general we find no people more disposed to do this than mathematicians; they are not fond of reasoning, as Mr. Locke expresses it, in the lump, but are for going into particulars, for allowing every thing

its due weight and nothing more, and for resolutely throwing out of the estimate all propositions, which are not directly and truly to the point.—It must further be said, as a general remark closely connected with what has just been observed, that those departments of science, which require demonstrative reasoning, are promotive of a characteristic of great value,—a love of the truth.

(3) Demonstrative reasoning gives to the mind a greater grasp or comprehension. This result, it is true, will not be experienced in the case of those, who have merely exercised themselves in the study of a few select demonstrations; it implies a familiarity of the mind with long and complicated trains of deductions. A thorough mathematician, who has made it a business to exercise himself in this method of reasoning, can hardly have been otherwise than sensible of that intellectual comprehension, or length and breadth of survey, which we have in view; since one demonstration is often connected with another, much in the same way as the subordinate parts of separate demonstrations are connected with each other; and he, therefore, finds it necessary, if he would go on with satisfaction and pleasure, to gather up and retain, in the grasp of his mind, all the general and subordinate propositions of a long treatise.

But, on the other hand, there are some results of a very great attention to sciences, which require the exclusive application of demonstrative reasoning, of a less favourable kind.

(1) It has been thought, that it has a tendency to render the mind mechanical; That is, while it increases its ability of acting in a given way, it diminishes the power of invention, and prevents its striking out into a new path, different from that, which it has been in the habit of going over.—(2) It nourishes a spirit of scepticism; or perhaps we may say, diminishes the power of belief. The exclusive mathematician has been accustomed to yield his assent to demonstration only; and it is but natural, that he should find some difficulty in being satisfied with any

lower degree of evidence. This disposition to doubt will be, in some measure, experienced, even in the transition from pure to mixed mathematics ; at least there will be an absence of that full and delightful satisfaction, which had hitherto been enjoyed. Still more will it be felt, when he is called upon to judge of events, and duties, and actions of common life, which do not admit of the application of demonstration.—In a word, it has been supposed to unfit the mind in a considerable degree for accurate discriminations as to moral evidence on all subjects whatever, where that species of evidence is alone admissible ; and also for fair and correct judgments in matters of taste.

Such, on the whole, being the result of an exclusive attention to sciences, which admit of demonstration alone, a restricted pursuit of them is all, that can be safely recommended. Not that we would absolutely set limits to the prosecution of them, but only propose, that other modes of mental discipline should be prosecuted at the same time. Those, who aim at a perfect education, will not “canton out to themselves a little Goshen in the intellectual world,” which is to receive all their labours, and leave the rest of the vast field of the mind to neglect, but will bestow a suitable share of culture on every part of it.



## CHAPTER TWENTY SIXTH.

### MORAL REASONING.

§. 298. Of the subjects and importance of moral reasoning.

**M**ORAL REASONING, which is the second great division or kind of reasoning, concerns opinions, actions, events &c. ; embracing in general those subjects, which do not come within the province of demonstrative reasoning. The subjects, to which it relates, are often briefly expressed by saying, that they are *matters of fact* ; nor would this definition, concise as it is, be likely to give an erroneous idea of them.—Skill in this kind of reasoning is of great use in the formation of opinions concerning the duties, and the general conduct of life. Some may be apt to think, that those, who have been most practised in demonstrative reasoning, can find no difficulty in adapting their intellectual habits to matters of mere probability. This opinion is not altogether well founded, as we have seen in the preceding chapter. Although that species of reasoning has a favourable result in giving persons a command over the attention, and in some other respects, whenever exclusively employed it has the effect in some degree to disqualify them for a correct judgment on those various subjects, which properly belong to moral reasoning.—The last, therefore, which has its distinctive name from the primary signification of the Latin *MORES*, viz. *manners, customs, &c.* requires a separate consideration.

## §. 299. Of the nature of moral certainty.

Moral reasoning causes in us different degrees of assent, and in this respect differs from demonstrative. In demonstration there is not only an immediate perception of the relation of the propositions compared together; but consequence of their abstract and determinate nature, there is also a knowledge or absolute certainty of their agreement or disagreement. In moral reasoning the case is somewhat different.—In both kinds we begin with certain propositions, which are either known or regarded as such. In both there is a series of propositions successively compared. But in moral reasoning, in consequence of the propositions not being abstract and fixed, and, therefore, often uncertain, the agreement or disagreement among them is in general not said to be known, but *presumed*; and this presumption may be more or less, admitting a great variety of degrees. While, therefore, one mode of reasoning is attended with knowledge; the other can properly be said to produce in most cases only judgment or opinion.—But the probability of such judgment or opinion may sometimes arise so high, as to exclude all reasonable doubt. And hence we then speak, as if we possessed certainty in respect to subjects, which admit merely of the application of moral reasoning. Although it is possible, that there may be some difference between a belief attendant on demonstration, and that produced by the highest probability, the effect on our feelings is at any rate essentially the same. A man, who should doubt the existence of the cities of London and Pekin, although he has no other evidence of it than that of testimony, could be considered hardly less singular and unreasonable, than one, who might take it into his head to doubt the truth of the propositions of Euclid.—It is this very high degree of probability, which we term *moral certainty*.

## §. 300. Of reasoning from analogy.

MORAL REASONING admits of some subordinate divisions; of these, the first to be mentioned is reasoning from analogy.—The word *analogy* is used to signify the vagueness,

but in general denotes a resemblance, either greater or less.—Having observed a consistency and uniformity in the operations of the physical world, we are naturally led to presume, that things of the same nature will be affected in the same way, and will produce the same effects; and also that the same or similar effects are to be attributed to like causes. ANALOGICAL REASONING, therefore, is that mental process, by which unknown truths or conclusions are inferred from the resemblances of things.

The argument, by which Sir Isaac Newton establishes the truth of universal gravitation, is of this sort. He proves, that the planets in their revolutions are deflected towards the sun in a manner precisely similar to the deflection of the earth towards the same luminary; and also that there is a similar deflection of the moon towards the earth, and of a body projected obliquely at the earth's surface towards the earth's centre. Hence he infers by analogy, that all these deflections originate from the same cause, or are governed by one and the same law, viz. *the power of gravitation*.

This method of reasoning is applicable to the inquiry, Whether the planets are inhabited? and furnishes the sole ground for the indulgence of such a supposition. We observe a resemblance in certain respects between Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and other planets, and the earth. They all revolve around the sun, as the earth does, and all derive light from that source. Several of them are ascertained to revolve on their axis, and, consequently, must have a succession of day and night. Some of them have moons, and all are subject to the law of gravitation. From these various similitudes we draw the conclusion by analogy, that those planets must be inhabited, like the earth.

There are a variety of subjects, both speculative and practical, in respect to which we may reason in this way, and sometimes with considerable satisfaction. And among others, this method of reasoning finds a place in the arguments of persons in the practice of the law. An attorney, for instance, advocates a case, which does not fall within the provisions of existing statutes, and for which he

in his authorities no exact precedent. He is, therefore, under the necessity of ascertaining, as far as possible, the analogy or resemblance between this case and others, which are given, and have been decided upon. And he has here a favourable opportunity for the exhibition of his research and discrimination.—A considerable part of the argumentation among pleaders at the bar is employed in urging various analogies of this sort. It is the business of the court in such instances to adjust, and compare them together, and allow them their due weight. In doing this, their discernment and integrity are called into exercise; for sometimes a small circumstance, and perhaps one, which the pleader has laboured to involve in obscurity, will disclose an essential distinction between the case in hand, and that on the file of precedents, to which it has been likened.

§ 301. Caution to be used in reasoning from analogy.

The last remark leads us to observe, that much care is necessary in arguments drawn from this source, especially in scientific investigations; and they are in all cases to be received with some degree of distrust. The ancient anatomists are an instance of precipitate reasoning from analogy. Being hindered by certain superstitions from dissecting the bodies of men, they endeavoured to obtain the information they wanted, by the dissection of those animals, whose internal structure was supposed to come nearest to that of the human body. In this way they were led into a variety of mistakes, which have been detected by later anatomists. It does not follow, because things resemble each other in a number of particulars, that this resemblance will be found in all others; and we are, therefore, always to consider ourselves in danger of pushing the position of similitude too far.

The proper use of analogical reasoning seems to be, in all scientific inquiries, to illustrate and confirm truths, which are susceptible of proof from other sources of evidence. A happy instance of this is the work of Bishop Butler, entitled, "*The Analogy of Natural*"

and revealed, to the Constitution and Course of nature."——It is not the object of the writer to prove the truth of religion, either natural or revealed, but to answer some objections, which may be brought against its principles. And this he does by proving, that the same objections exist to the providence of God in the natural world. There is an analogy or resemblance in the two; and if the objections, which are brought, will reject him from the authorship of what we term religion, either natural or revealed, they will dethrone him also from all direction in the ordinary economy of nature.

§. 302. Of reasoning by induction.

We come now to another method of moral reasoning, viz. by induction. *Inductive reasoning* is the inferring of general truths from particular facts, that have fallen under our observation. Our experience teaches us, that nature is governed by uniform laws; and we have a firm expectation, (whether it be an original principle of our constitution or whatever may be the origin of it,) that events will happen in future, as we have seen them happen in times past. With this state of mind we are prepared to deduce inferences by induction.

When a property has been found in a number of subjects of the same kind, and nothing of a contradictory nature appears, we have the strongest expectation of finding the same property in all the individuals of the same class; in other words, we come to the conclusion, that the property is a general one. Accordingly, we apply a magnet to several pieces of iron; we find in every instance a strong attraction taking place; and we conclude, although we have made the experiment with only a small number of the masses of iron actually in existence, that it is a property of iron to be thus affected by that substance, or that iron is susceptible of magnetical attraction. This is conclusion drawn by induction.

The belief, which attends a well conducted process of inductive reasoning, bears a decided character; it is *no* probability of the highest kind, or what is sometimes term

moral certainty ; and is at least found to be sufficient for all practical purposes. We obtain all the general truths, relating to the properties and laws of material objects, in this way.

And we thus not only acquire a knowledge of the general nature of material objects, but apply the same inductive process also in the investigation of laws, which govern the operations of the mind. It is by experience or observing what takes place in a number of individuals, that we are able to infer the general law of association, viz., When two or more ideas have existed in the mind in immediate succession, they are afterwards found to be mutually suggested by each other. It is the same in ascertaining other general laws.

The method of induction, which is recommended by Lord Bacon, as one of the most important aids in the search after truth, is employed not only in ascertaining the general facts both of physical and intellectual nature, but is employed also in the formation of such practical rules and maxims, as are of use in the common concerns of life.

§. 303. Of the caution necessary in inductive processes.

Reasoning in this method requires the exercise of caution, no less than by analogy. It is especially liable to prove fallacious, whenever our investigations have been marked with impatience, and our judgments are formed on a very small number of facts.—When the number of examined instances is large, and the results are uniform, the conclusion amounts to moral certainty. But when the number of such instances is small, and the results are altogether uniform, the judgments formed will possess a greater or less degree of probability, varying with circumstances.

§. 304. Of combined or accumulated arguments.

When a proposition in geometry is given to be demonstrated, it sometimes happens, that two or more solutions be offered, leading to the same end. The theorem or

the problem is one and the same, as also the conclusion, but there may be more than one train of reasoning, more than one series of intermediate steps, connecting the proposition, which is to be investigated, with the result. But as the conclusion in each of these different cases is certain, it does not strengthen it, although it may gratify curiosity, to resort to a different and additional process.—It is not thus in moral reasoning. The great difference between the two kinds of reasoning, as before observed, is not so much in the mental process, as in the subjects, about which they are employed. Now as the subjects in moral reasoning are not abstract, and are, therefore, often attended with uncertainty, our belief, when we arrive at the conclusion, is not always of the highest kind. More frequently it is some inferior degree of probability. Hence in any moral inquiry the more numerous the series of arguments, which terminates in a particular conclusion, the stronger will be our belief in the truth of that conclusion.

Thus we may suppose a question to arise, Whether the Romans occupied the island of Great Britain at some period previous to the Saxon conquest? In reference to this inquiry a number of independent arguments may be brought forward; (1) The testimony of the Roman historians; (2) The remains of buildings, roads, and encampments, which indicate a Roman origin; (3) The coins, urns, &c. which have been discovered.—Although these arguments are independent of each other; they all bear upon the same conclusion; and being combined together, they very essentially increase the strength of our belief.

§. 305. Of the limitation of power in reasoning.

At the commencement of the last chapter some account was given of the mental process in all cases of reasoning whatever. From the statements there made, it appeared, that the great law of association is directly & very effectively concerned in every process of this kind. It is to this law we are indebted for the introduction of propositions, having a bearing upon the subject, and applicable to the occasion. We are no more able by a

act of volition to secure the existence of applicable and conclusive points in any given argument, than by mere volition to give creation to our thoughts in the first instance.

Persons, therefore, of the most gifted intellect are held in check, and are restrained by the ultimate principles of their mental constitution; these are boundaries, which they cannot pass, and those, who are capable of the greatest efforts in framing arguments, will be no less sensible of this truth, when they carefully examine the course of their thoughts, than others.—Hence we are led to see in some measure what things enter into the mental possessions and discipline of a successful reasoner.

§. 306. Of the requisites of a skilful reasoner.

(1) The skilful reasoner must be well informed.—No man can reason well on a subject, unless he has informed himself in regard to it. That many speak on subjects, which are proposed to them, without having made any preparation, cannot be denied; but there is a vast difference between noisy, incoherent declamation, and a well wrought argument, made up of suitable propositions, following each other with a direct and satisfactory reference to the conclusion. The mind passes from one point to another, connected with the argument, and in so doing is governed by the principles of association, as we have seen; but what opportunity can there possibly be for the operation of these principles, when the mind is called to fasten itself upon a subject, and to decide upon that subject, without any knowledge of those circumstances, which may be directly involved in it, or of its relations, and tendencies? Let the greatest orator attempt to speak with such slight information on the question to be debated, and he would appear to hardly greater credit, than a schoolboy in his first essays.

(2) Much depends also on practice.—In the prosecution of an argument, there is necessarily a mental perception of the congruity of its several parts, or of the agreement of the succeeding proposition with that, which



went before. The degree of readiness in bringing together propositions, and in putting forth such perceptions, will greatly depend on the degree of practice.

The effect of frequent practice, resulting in what is termed a *habit*, is often witnessed in those, who follow any mechanic calling; where we find that what was once done with difficulty comes in time to be performed with great ease and readiness. The muscles of such persons seem to move with a kind of instinctive facility and accuracy in the performance of those works, to which they have been for a long time addicted.

There is a similar effect of frequent practice in the increase of quickness and facility in our mental operations; and certainly as much so in those, which are implied in reasoning, as in any others. If a person has never been in the practice of going through geometrical demonstrations, he finds his mind very slowly and with difficulty advancing from one step to another; while on the other hand, a person, who has so often practised this species of argumentation, as to have formed a habit, advances forward from one part of the train of reasoning to another with great rapidity and delight.—And the result is the same in any process of moral reasoning.

§. 307. Of moral reasoning as suited to our situation as accountable beings.

Some remarks were made in the last section of the last chapter and in the first of this, tending to show the comparative value of demonstrative and moral reasoning. There is another point of some consequence, which has a connection with that subject, remaining to be mentioned here. It is this;—Moral reasoning, inasmuch as it does not *compel* our assent, but leaves the mind, in most cases, in some degree of doubt, is peculiarly suited to our condition as moral agents.

If all the common subjects of life admitted of demonstration, and all the conclusions, which we formed, were certain and irresistible, it would come near driving both vice and virtue out of the world. It would subject the vol-

untary powers to a constraint little short of mechanical ; and have a direct tendency to confound characters and dispositions ; neither demanding a contest with passion, nor the exercise of candour, nor desires to learn the will of God, and excluding, in a great measure, religious faith and other principles, which are now suited to our situation, and training us up for the day of final account.—While, therefore, the judgments, resulting from moral reasoning, will be allowed to be in general sufficient to guide us, wherever there is an honest and candid heart ; they evidently present no insuperable barriers to the influence of pride, and passion, and self-interest, and prejudice. They hold out ample inducements to those, who love the truth, and are sincere ; but those, who are not of this character, will no doubt pursue a different course, pervert evidence, and bring their conclusions to meet and fall in with their private views. And thus by their own works they are judged.—So that moral reasoning is especially suited to beings, who are accountable for their passions, accountable for their perversions of the truth, and for all their conduct ; and this is a circumstance, in no small degree, to its honour.

## CHAPTER TWENTY SEVENTH.

### DIALECTICS OR RULES OF DEBATE.

#### §. 308. Of the nature and occasions of debate.

**I**T is the professed object of a **DEBATE**, to arrange and present arguments, applicable to a particular subject, in such a manner as to produce in the minds of others the conviction, which exists in our own. Moreover, in using this term, we commonly apply it to subjects, which are doubtful, and which admit of an array of statements on both sides. Such being both its object, and the nature of the subjects, about which it is employed, it always implies the presence of an opponent, and, consequently, the strife of one mind with another. The rules, which govern, or ought to govern, both the spirit and the method of a debate, are termed **DIALECTICAL**; a word, for which, (together with its substantive, **DIALECTICS**,) we are indebted originally to the writings of Aristotle, but perhaps not less to the methodically disputatious temper of the Scholastic ages. **Dialectics**, therefore, seems to be a subordinate division of **LOGIC**; the latter being the more general term, and embracing whatever concerns the nature, kinds, or applications of reasoning.

Formal and vigorous discussions among persons of different sentiments are not unfrequent. There are such set debates in the common intercourse of life, in the higher schools of learning, in courts of justice, in literary and philosophical societies, and in ecclesiastical councils. Especially do legislative assemblies, which, in later times, have so rapidly multiplied, afford frequent opportunities

for the efforts of the honest dialectician. He has there great motives, operating upon him, and calling him to exert forth the noblest powers of argument.—So that it is a valuable accomplishment, especially in this age of the world, not only to be able to reason well in general, but in DEBATE; that is, to maintain and elicit the truth in public, and against an opponent.

§. 309. Persons may be able reasoners and yet fail in debate.

But is it true, that persons may be capable of reasoning, and yet fail in public disputations? Many facts lead to conclude, that it is. Persons are often found, possessing the most just and efficient understandings, who are incapable on public occasions of stating the grounds of their own conclusions, so as to produce a like conviction in others. The English Protector, Oliver Cromwell, is a person of this description. (See §. 222.)—"All accounts, says Mr. Hume, agree in ascribing to Cromwell a tiresome, dark, unintelligible elocution, even when he had no intention to disguise his meaning; yet no man's notions were ever, in such a variety of difficult cases, more incisive and judicious."—An English officer, a friend of Lord Mansfield, was once appointed to the government of Jamaica. He expressed some doubts of his competency to preside in the court of chancery. Mansfield assured him, that he would not find the difficulty so great, as he imagined.—"Trust, said he, to your own good sense in forming your opinions, but beware of stating the grounds of your judgments. The judgments will probably be right; the arguments will infallibly be wrong."

Many of the most respectable and valuable men in our legislative assemblies are persons, who are rarely heard in debate. While they are known to possess reach of thought and correctness of judgment, they exhibit in public discussion little more than confusion and apparent inability.

Mr. Jefferson, author of the Declaration of American independence, is declared by one of his illustrious associates,\* to have been a silent member of the

\* John Adams. See North Am. Review, vol. xxii. p. 360.

Continental Congress. And yet he had at that period the reputation of literature and science, and of being a happy writer; and lent great aid by his promptness and decision on committees.

Such instances, which are by no means unfrequent, sufficiently show, that there is ground for regarding public argument as an art by itself, and for bestowing upon it a separate examination. Accordingly the following rules, although they do not profess to exhaust the subject of dialectical precautions and aids, are proposed for the consideration of the debater.

§. 310. RULE I. Be influenced in debating by a desire of the truth.

In all questions, which admit of discussion, and in which we find ourselves at variance with the opinions of others, we are to make truth our object. A desire of the truth is the first qualification in such inquiries.

The opposite of a desire of the truth is a wish to decide the subject of dispute in one way rather than another. The foundation of such a preference of one result to another are in general the prejudices of interest and passion; and these are the great enemies of truth. Whenever we are under their influence, we form a different estimation of testimony and of other sources of evidence from what we should do under other circumstances; and at such times they can hardly fail to lead us to false results.

We have an illustration of the effects of a disputatious spirit, unconnected with any desire of the truth, among the Schoolmen. No persons seem to have been more skilled in the technical forms of argument. To dispute with readiness and skill was considered among them a part of education so valuable, that all possible pains were taken in securing this mental accomplishment. But the acquisition of truth did not form any prominent part of their plan. The subjects, about which they debated, were frivolous, and the spirit, which animated them, exceedingly captious and disingenuous. The testimony of John of Salisbury, a learned man of the Scholastic ages, confirms this. He visited Paris in the year 1137, and attended upon the lectures

famous Abelard and other masters, and made  
 pements in learning. A number of years af-  
 returned to the place of his early studies, in  
 fer with his former associates, who yet re-  
 a, on the topics, on which they had been used

them (says he) the same men, and in the same  
 ad they advanced a single step towards resolv-  
 ent questions, nor added a single proposition,  
 all, to their stock of knowledge. Whence, I  
 at indeed it was easy to collect, that dialectic  
 ever useful they may be when connected with  
 ies of learning, are in themselves barren and  
 -It may be briefly added, that the above men-  
 s important to be observed on all occasions of  
 hatever, but particularly in debate ; because,  
 o the influence of general interest and passion  
 ded to, the presence of others and the love of  
 an opponent too often induce men to forget or  
 the claims, which truth is always entitled to

Endeavour correctly to state the subject of inquiry  
 and discussion.

rule in respect to debating is, that the ques-  
 fairly and correctly stated.—No artifice here  
 ved. The matter in controversy may be stated  
 ay as to include in the very enunciation of it  
 aken for granted, which must necessarily lead  
 1 in favour of one of the opponents. But this  
 begging the question, a species of fallacy or  
 on which we shall again have occasion to  
 -Sometimes the subject of discussion is stated  
 y, that the true point at issue is wholly left out.  
 roper, therefore, in many cases to adopt the  
 special pleaders, and first to ascertain all the  
 hich the opponents agree, and those in which  
 And then they can hardly fail of directing  
 ents to what is truly the subject of contention.  
 that there may not be a possibility of

derstanding here, dialecticians should aim to have all ideas of every thing stated in the question, which has intimate connection with the point at issue. That is, the ordinate parts of the question, and even particular words are to be examined. If the statement affirm or deny a thing, in regard to the qualities or properties of material bodies, it is incumbent upon us to possess as clear an idea as possible, both of the object in general, and of the properties or qualities in particular. Similar remarks apply to other subjects of inquiry of whatever kind.

As an illustration of these directions, we will suppose that the point in dispute is, Whether civil government originates in all cases from the people? Here it is necessary to understand what is meant by the word government—that is, whether it is meant to include in the term all the different kinds of public authority, such as absolute, monarchical, and aristocratical, as well as republican, and to give it the most general meaning. The reason of this is that some might be inclined to say, that absolute governments, such as those of Russia and the Ottoman Porte, are no governments at all, but merely usurpations or tyrannies; and, therefore, ought to be excluded from the inquiry. The meaning of the word, originate, is also to be looked into. We are to know what constitutes a beginning or origin in this case; and particularly whether the term, as here used, implies and admits the validity of a tacit agreement, or not. In the inquiry, it will necessarily be admitted, that many governments exist without any written or express agreement on the part of the people; and still it may be urgently contended, that they have originated by virtue of a tacit agreement, provided it be granted, that there is any such thing as a tacit agreement, which is binding, and which, therefore, can be a ground of existence or origin.—The taking of such precautions would often have prevented great waste of words, as well as undue indulgence of irritable feelings; and would have often led more directly and surely to the discovery of truth.

2. (III.) Consider the kind of evidence applicable to the subject. As one subject clearly admits of the application of species of evidence, while another as clearly requires evidence of a different kind, we are thence enabled to lay down this rule, viz., We are to consider what kind of evidence is appropriate to the question in debate.—When inquiry is one of a purely abstract nature, and all the positions, involved in the reasoning, are of the same kind, then we have the evidence of that form of consciousness, which is termed intuition or intuitive perception; the conclusion, for reasons already mentioned, is certain. In the examination of the properties of material objects, we depend originally on the evidence of the senses; which gives a character and strength to our belief according to the circumstances, under which the objects are presented to them. In judging of those facts in the conduct of men, which have not come under our own observation, we rely on testimony. This source of belief varies probability in a greater or less degree, according to the testimony is from one or more, given by a person, who understands the subject, to which it relates, or not.

And again, some subjects admit of the evidence of direct action, and in respect to others we have no other aids, but the less authoritative reasonings from analogy. In other cases, the evidence is wholly made up of various incidental circumstances, which are found to have relation to the subject in hand, and which affect the belief in different degrees and for various causes.—And hence as all sources of belief, as well as the belief itself, have an intimate connection with the subject before us, they ought to be taken into consideration. The evidence should be adapted to the question. But if the question admit of more than one kind of evidence, then all are entitled to their due weight.

§. 312. (IV.) Avoid all unmeaning propositions.

In the subject of discussion, and in setting down your opponent, avoid the introduction of prop-



positions, which are destitute of meaning. A proposition is in general said to be without meaning, when it is stated, that all the information, it gives as a whole, is ready contained in one of the parts, viz., the subject.

The first class, answering this view, may be termed IDENTICAL PROPOSITIONS.—The proposition, *WHATEVER IS*, may be given as an instance. When examined, it is found to teach us nothing; and although it was, in some times of the Scholastic philosophy, employed as an aid, and thought to be of much consequence in helping as a medium in argument, the proof, which it brings in any case whatever, amounts to no more than this, that the same word may with certainty be predicated of itself. When we say that man is man, or that blue is blue, we receive as much information and as valuable, as when we say, that whatever is, is; that is, we know no more afterwards than we did before the enunciation of the proposition. The same of all, which belong to this class.

There is a second class of unmeaning propositions slightly differing in form from the above, but are the same in substance, viz., *THOSE, WHERE A PART ONLY OF THE COMPLEX IDEA IS PREDICATED OF THE WHOLE.*

Hence to this class belong all those, where the genus is predicated of the species; when, for instance, it is said that lead is a metal. If we know the meaning of the term, lead, which is the subject of the proposition, we of course know, that it is a metal. The propositions, that gold is yellow, and that man is rational, are of this kind. We are supposed to know the meaning of the separate terms of these propositions; one of these terms is the subject; and this evidently involves and implies the meaning of the proposition, taken as a whole. When, on the contrary, we are told, that man has a notion of God, that man is cast into sleep by opium, we then learn nothing, since the ideas here expressed are not contained in the word, man.—When a single word is employed with vagueness and inconsistency, it is rightly considered a proper subject of criticism, and may fairly be objected to; and the same liberty, and for the same reasons

perly be taken with unmeaning propositions, which give the appearance of carrying us onward in the investigation of a subject, but which, when truly estimated, leave us no wiser, than before we heard them.

14. (V.) Avoid the introduction of acknowledged and common-place propositions.

There is another rule, relating to the conduct of public debate, which is of a like nature with the last mentioned—viz. Not to burden the argument with acknowledged common-place propositions.—The common feelings and experience of mankind have so firmly established maxims as true, that the great mass would no more think of controverting them, than would the geometrician of questioning the truth of axioms. These propositions differ from those, considered in the last section, in having no meaning, and perhaps important meaning. But it ought to be forgotten, that we are supposed to speak in the presence of those, who have had some experience and possess a share of common sense; and who need not to be reminded of truths, however significant, which are already familiar to them, as the letters of their mother tongue. If the question depend directly upon such truths, then there is no need of discussion; and if it do not, then it is certainly a prejudice to our cause to let them take up our attention, while there are other points of moment more closely connected with its issue. A studious enumeration and arrangement of common place statements offends the hearers, because it plainly intimates, that we consider them as ignorant, than they will be willing to admit; and besides, it causes tedium and listlessness. But a worthy and successful dialectician, while he sedulously seeks the truth, always found to observe two things; first, to keep down feelings of disgust and of hostile prejudice in the minds of his hearers, and, second, to preserve their attention interested and fully alive. This last can be done only by presenting the prominent views of a subject, by investing it with every appropriate attraction, and urging them home on the audience by a variety of constant appeals.

§. 315. (VI.) Reject the aid of false arguments or *sophisms*.

There is a species of false reasoning, which we call *sophism*. A *sophism* is an argument, which contains a secret fallacy, under the general appearance of truth. The aid of such arguments, which are intended to deceive, and are inconsistent with a love of truth, should be rejected.

(1) *IGNORATIO ELENCHI*, or misapprehension of the question, is one instance of the *sophism*. It exists when the arguments advanced do not truly apply to the question in debate. Let it be supposed, that some person has founded a literary institution. The question is, whether he be a man of learning, a scholar? It is argued, in consequence of having founded a seminary for scientific purposes. Here we may deny the connection between the premises and the conclusion, although the argument is somewhat specious; because we know the fact, that many men of but small information have been the patrons of science. That is, an argument is applied, which, it is supposed, would not have been admissible, if there had been a proper understanding of the import and spirit of the question, and of what was applicable to it.

(2) *PETITIO PRINCIPII*, or begging of the question, is another instance of *sophism*. This *sophism* exists whenever the disputant offers, in proof of a proposition, the proposition itself in other words. The following is given as an instance of this fallacy in reasoning;—A person attempts to prove, that God is eternal, by asserting that his existence is without beginning and without end. Here the proof, which is offered, and the proposition which is to be proved, are essentially the same.—We are told, that opium causes sleep, because it has a sedative quality, or that grass grows by means of its vegetative power, the same thing is repeated in other terms. This fallacy is very frequently practised; and a little skill in detecting it would spoil many a fine saying, and many an elaborate argument.—What is called a species of *sophism* very near

the above. It consists in making two propositions reciprocally prove each other.

(3) *NON CAUSA PRO CAUSA*, or the assignation of a false cause.—People are unwilling to be thought ignorant; rather than be thought so, they will impose on the credulity of their fellow men, and sometimes on themselves, by assigning false causes of events. Nothing is more common, than this sophism among illiterate people; pride is not diminished by deficiency of learning, and such people, therefore, must gratify it by assigning such causes of events as they find nearest at hand. Hence, when the appearance of a comet is followed by a famine or a war, they are disposed to consider it as the cause of those calamities. If a person have committed some flagrant crime, and shortly after suffer some heavy distress, it is no uncommon thing to hear the former assigned, as the direct and the sole cause of the latter.

(4) Another species of sophistry is called *FALLACIA ACCIDENTIS*.—We fall into this kind of false reasoning, whenever we give an opinion concerning the general nature of a thing from some accidental circumstance. Thus, the Christian religion has been made the pretext for persecutions, and has in consequence been the source of much suffering; but it is a sophism to conclude, that it is, on the whole, not a great good to the human race, because it has been attended with this perversion. Again, if a medicine have operated in a particular case unfavourably, or, in another case, have operated very favourably, the universal rejection or reception of it, in consequence of the favourable or unfavourable result in a particular instance, would be a hasty and fallacious induction of essentially the same sort. That is, the general nature of the thing is estimated from a circumstance, which may be wholly accidental.

§. 316. (VII.) Discipline the powers of debate by practice.

In the chapter on Moral Reasoning some remarks were made on the influence of practice. But we have had occasion to see, (what indeed is obvious to comm

sense,) that some persons are able to reason with their pen, and not with their tongue; in their closets, but not in the more trying conflict of public debate. Hence there may be not only a practice, necessary to reasoning in all cases; but a superadded practice and of a different kind, necessary in dialectic contests.—The effect of dialectical practice will be, in the first place, to ensure a suitable degree of confidence. Granting that all persons do not stand in absolute need of this qualification, it is equally evident, that some do. The watchful presence of others, and the interest taken in the subject of discussion, have a tendency to disconcert such as have not naturally a good share of fortitude. This perplexed and embarrassed state of mind, which is exceedingly unfavourable to the creditable conduct of an argument, will stand a better chance of being prevented by practice, than in any other way.

Practice in debating, will aid, in the second place, in giving a ready command of suitable language. He, who reasons with his pen and in the retirement of his closet, may revolve a proposition long in his mind, before he clothes it in the requisite expression. This is not allowed in debate; the occasion requires a readiness not only of thought, but of words. This readiness implies a HABIT of association between the sign and the thing signified, between the word and the thought. And all intellectual habits (CHAP. XIX.) imply, in their formation, practice or a frequency of repetition.

And, furthermore, as the object of debating is to produce in the minds of others the conviction, which exists in our own, it will be well to remember, that this result depends in some degree on the employment of natural signs.

Signs are not limited to artificial language, but include various gestures, and the colouring and play of countenance. Hence the person, who has a freedom of signs of this sort, and can perfectly control them, possesses an advantage over others. But it can be said with contradiction, that this freedom of gesture and prompt significancy of the looks depend much upon practice. Occasions, therefore, of intellectual controversy are not to

avoided, but to be sought by those, who aim at the reputation and the power of able dialecticians. Nevertheless, the rule under consideration ought to be cautiously guarded. Many persons, by inordinately indulging in debate, become not only talkative, but assuming and obstinate. These unfortunate results will be most effectually checked by ever keeping in mind, that we are not at liberty to disregard the moral obligation, which binds us on all occasions to the love and search of the truth.

§. 317. (VIII.) Of adherence to our opinions.

Whenever the rules laid down have been followed, and conclusions have been formed with a careful and candid regard to the evidence presented, those opinions are to be asserted and maintained with a due degree of confidence. It would evince an unjustifiable weakness to be driven from our honest convictions by the effrontery, or even by the upright, though misguided zeal of an opponent. Not that a person is to set himself up for infallible, and to suppose, that new accessions of evidence are impossible, or that it is an impossibility for him to have new views of the evidence already examined. But a suitable degree of stability is necessary in order to be respected and useful; and, in the case supposed, such stability can be exhibited without incurring the charge, which is sometimes thrown out, of doggedness and intolerance.

It is further to be observed, that we are not always to relinquish judgments, which have been formed in the way pointed out, when objections are afterwards raised, which we cannot immediately answer. The person thus attacked, can, with good reason, argue in this way; I have once examined the subject carefully and candidly; the evidence, both in its particulars and in its multitude of bearings, has had its weight; many minute and evanescent circumstances were taken into view by the mind, which have now vanished from my recollection; I, therefore, do not feel at liberty to alter an opinion thus formed, in consequence of an objection now brought up, I am unable to answer; but choose to adhere to my judgment, until

the whole subject, including this objection can be re-examined.—This reasoning would in most cases be correct, and would be entirely consistent with that love of truth and openness to conviction, which ought ever to be maintained.

§. 318. Effects on the mind of debating for victory instead of truth.

By way of supporting the remarks under the first rule, we here introduce the subject of contending for victory merely. He, who contends with this object, takes every advantage of his opponent, which can subserve his own purpose. For instance, he will demand a species of proof or a degree of proof, which the subject in dispute does not admit; he gives, if possible, a false sense to the words and statements, employed by the other side; he questions facts, which he himself fully believes and every body else present, in the expectation that the opposite party is not furnished with direct and positive evidence of them. In a word, wherever an opening presents, he takes the utmost advantage of his opponent, however much against his own internal convictions of right and justice.

Such a course, to say nothing of its moral turpitude, effectually unsettles that part of our mental economy, which concerns the grounds and laws of belief. The practice of inventing cunningly devised objections against arguments, known to be sound, necessarily impairs the influence, which such arguments ought ever to exert over us. Hence the remark has been made with justice, that persons, who addict themselves to this practice, frequently turn out to be sceptics. They have so often perplexed, and apparently overthrown what they felt to be true, they at last question the existence of any fixed grounds of belief in the human constitution, and begin to doubt of every thing.

This effect, even when there is an undoubted regard for the truth, will be found to follow from habits of ardent disputation, unless there be a frequent recurrence to the original principles of the mind, which relate to the nature and laws of belief. The learned Chillingworth is an in-

stance. The consequences, to which the training up of his vast powers to the sole art of disputation finally led, are stated by Clarendon.—“ Mr. Chillingworth had spent all his younger time in disputations and had arrived at so great a mastery, that he was inferiour to no man in those skirmishes ; but he had, with his notable perfection in this exercise, contracted such an irresolution and habit of doubting, that by degrees he grew confident of nothing.”

“ Neither the books of his adversaries nor any of their persons, though he was acquainted with the best of both, had ever made great impression on him. All his doubts grew out of himself, when he assisted his scruples with all the strength of his own reason ; and was then too hard for himself. But finding as little quiet and repose in those victories, he quickly recovered by a new appeal to his own judgment ; so that he was in truth, in all his sallies and retreats, his own convert.”

§. 319. On the influence of the study of the law.

The foregoing views admit of being further illustrated from the practice of the law, where debaters sometimes find themselves under strong inducements to defend a cause, without being perfectly satisfied of its justice. Mr. Burke, a high authority, has said of the law, that it quickens and invigorates the mind more than all the other kinds of learning put together, but he is also of opinion, that it is not apt, except in persons very happily born, to open and to liberalize it, exactly in the same proportion. And in point of fact, how often do we hear it said of this or that great lawyer, he is equally capable of arguing either side of a question, whether of law or of policy ; and that too with power and plausibility. But this is doubtful praise ; implying, in some cases at least, a want of high moral principle, and always implying a disregard of those internal foundations of belief, which, when once shaken, all men are not able, like Chillingworth, to build up again in their original strength. The practice of the law, in itself considered, undoubtedly has a tendency to these results. The members of that profession are constantly under the



necessity of referring to the provisions of the national constitution, to legislative enactments, and to court decisions. Hence their powers, however great, are fettered. They are compelled by the circumstances, under which they act, to show how the cause now under trial agrees or disagrees with principles already established, and with cases already decided upon. They are to measure the rectitude or want of rectitude in things by the standards already in existence, without having that liberty, which would be highly agreeable to minds of a philosophic turn, to institute inquiries into right and wrong in the abstract.

And what is another circumstance quite unfavourable to the exercise of a free and philosophic spirit, they are apt to make references to legal decisions, legislative acts, &c. under the influence of that bias, to which they are exposed in consequence of their zeal in behalf of the respective litigants, whose cause they may have espoused.

If it be asked then, how happens it, that there are so many men in the practice of the law, who not only possess the power of making refined and acute distinctions, together with wit and invention, but also in addition to these requisites of the Forum, are candid and liberal, and are capable, as any men whatever, of forming a discreet judgment on any complicated concern; the natural reply is, that such men, aware of the tendency of their professional contests, have guarded against it; and, in the true spirit of an enlightened wisdom, have made a successful effort to keep the mind free, liberal, and well balanced against the contracting influence of their calling.

§. 320. Mental process in voting on legislative and other subjects.

The object of debate, as stated at the commencement of this chapter, is to produce in the minds of others the conviction, which exists in our own. The proper field, therefore, of debate is some public assembly; and it is in public assemblies in particular, which have a political or legislative object, that the most memorable displays of the powerful art have been made. With no small degree of justice might the encomium be passed on many others.

ational senates, which Milton has so rightly bestowed on the famed debaters of Athens,

— “ Whose resistless eloquence  
 “ Wielded at will that fierce democracy,  
 “ Shook the arsenal, and fulminated over Greece  
 “ To Macedon and Artaxerxes’ throne.”

But what shall we say of the nature of that conviction, which exists in the minds of the whole assembly? This is a question, which it requires some care to settle. It is a matter of some difficulty to tell precisely, how far the belief of the legislative mass is controlled by evidence, exaggerated and rendered misshapen by feeling. Without, however, entering on this topic, or on various others arising out of the singular exhibition of large assemblies depending before the will of one man, we shall only take time to remark on an opinion relative to the formal decisions of legislatures, which has been offered by Condorcet. We shall come at the views of that writer by taking some familiar instance, where they may be supposed to apply.

A proposition in some national legislature, (perhaps whether the independence of some new formed republic shall be acknowledged,) is to be discussed. After a hearing of the debaters and a thorough examination of the subject, the votes are taken, and a majority of them are in favour of the acknowledgment of independence in the case proposed. Under this general question, the acknowledgment of independence, it is easy to see, that there must be any subordinate propositions, having a connexion more or less remote with the general question.

The question we suppose to have been decided in the affirmative. Condorcet has expressed an opinion of this kind, that, if the vote were taken on every subordinate proposition, the decision might be directly the reverse, in the negative, instead of the affirmative. But there is reason to believe, that this view of the subject is incorrect. In voting on the general question, every member thus voting virtually gives his opinion also on every subordinate inquiry. There are perhaps five, eight, or ten minor sub-

jects, which it is important for him to examine; and it is only reasonable to suppose, that this has been done, and that he has in his own mind made up an opinion on them. And the last opinion, the opinion on the general question, may properly be considered as involving the comparison, combination, and the just result of all the subordinate or minor decisions.

This is sometimes a very rapid mental process, so much so in some cases, as not to be remembered by the voter himself. But, if he be an honest man and desirous to give a judgment, which his own conscience would approve, something of this kind must have taken place.

NOTE. There are, in the English language, a number of books of merit on the subject of reasoning in general, and of public debates. (1) Locke's CONDUCT of the UNDERSTANDING; in this work, although it is of less extent and value than his Essay, there are some original and important remarks on demonstrative and other forms of reasoning, on fallacies or sophisms, on the influence of practice, on difference of natural talents, &c. (2) Watt's IMPROVEMENT of the MIND; in respect to this book, it is remarked by Dr. Johnson, that he had perused it with great pleasure, and he further observes, that instructors may be charged with deficiency in their duty, if they do not recommend it. The justice of this commendation has generally been accorded to, although more recent inquiries have shown, that some of the views of the mind in the book in question are defective. (3) Gambier's INTRODUCTION to the STUDY of MORAL EVIDENCE; this valuable treatise, which has been but lately presented to the public, contains many useful directions, relating to moral reasoning, and examines particularly the subject of grounds of belief or evidence.

Examine likewise Locke's Essay, Bk. iv; Buffier's First Truths, Pt. I. chs. xxi—xxiv; Condillac's, the Port Royal, and Watt's Logic; De Stutt Tracy, (*Heologie*,) Pt. II. chs. i, ii; Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric, Bk. I. ch. v. § §. 1, 2; Stewart's Elements, Vol. II. chs. i, ii.; Brown's LECTS. XLVIII, XLIX; Brucker's History of Philosophy, Bk. VII, ch. III; Sir J. Mackintosh on the Practice and Study of the Law.

## CHAPTER TWENTY EIGHTH.

### EMOTIONS OF BEAUTY.

#### §. 321. Explanation of emotions of beauty.

**T**HERE is a class of our mental states, to which we commonly give the name of **EMOTIONS**. We speak of a melancholy emotion, of a cheerful emotion, of emotions of pity, wonder, and the like. Among other emotions are those of **BEAUTY** and **SUBLIMITY**.—In the présent chapter, our attention will be particularly directed to those of beauty. Of emotions of beauty it is hardly less difficult to give a definition, than to define the sensations of colour, or of taste. We find in them, however, these marks or characteristics.—(1) The emotion of beauty is always a pleasant one. We never give the name to one, which is painful or to any feeling of disgust. Whenever, therefore, we speak of an emotion of beauty, we imply, in the use of terms, some degree of satisfaction or pleasure. All nations, the illiterate as well as the scientific, use the same language with this import.—(2) We never speak of emotions of beauty, to whatever degree may be our experience of inward satisfaction, without referring such emotions to something external. The same emotion, which is called satisfaction or delight of mind, when it is wholly and exclusively internal, we find to be termed an emotion of beauty, if we are able to refer it to something without, and to spread its charms around any external object.

## §. 322. Of what is meant by beautiful objects.

There are a great variety of material objects, which excite the emotion of beauty; that is, when the objects are presented, this emotion, in a greater or less degree, (for the emotion itself is susceptible of many varieties,) immediately exists.—As to the existence of material objects, it is unnecessary to dispute. We take it for granted; although if we were called upon for a definition of them, we could only say, that they are mere assemblages of particles, and that the different arrangement of those particles constitutes the difference between one object and another. The ashes, that are mouldering in the tomb, do not differ from the living form of man in the materials, but only in disposition, and in symmetry. In themselves considered, therefore, all bodies of matter are without beauty; the fairest creations of architecture, and the dust, on which they are erected, are alike; all are originally destitute of that interest, which we denominate beauty.

The beauty of objects being something not in the nature of the things themselves, although we constantly speak of them, as possessing that quality, it is necessary to enter into some explanation.—Whenever certain objects are presented to us, there is a feeling of pleasure, in a higher or less degree. This feeling, which is termed an emotion of beauty, does not exist, it will readily be admitted, in the object, which cannot be supposed to be susceptible of it, but in the mind. And here we have the solution of the point, on which we are remarking.—We have from earliest childhood been in the habit of referring this mental emotion, of which no inanimate object can possibly be susceptible, to external objects, as its antecedent. We have made this reference for so long a time, and so frequently, that at last, in consequence of a very tenacious association, the object itself seems to us to be invested with delight, and to beam out with a sort of intellectual radiance; that is, to have qualities, which can truly properly exist only in the mind. Such objects are to

The result of this strong and early disposition, to refer emotions within us to those external objects, which the antecedents to them, is, that all material creation clothed over again. There is a beauty in the sun ; there beauty in woods and waters ; and blossom, and flower, fruit are all invested with the same transferred or associated splendour. But annul the emotions of the mind, and it throws back its own inward light on the objects and it ; and the sun will become dark, and the moon withhold its shining, and the flower will be no more fruitful, than the sod, from whose mouldering bosom it springs up.

§. 323. Extensive application of the term beauty.

Emotions of beauty are felt and perhaps in a higher degree than any where else, in the contemplation of objects of light, of woods, waters, azure skies, cultivated fields, particularly of the human form. But they are not limited to these ; emotions, which not only bear the same name, but are analogous in kind, exist also on the contemplation of many other things.

The sense or feeling of beauty exists, when we are following out a happy train of reasoning ; and, hence, the mathematician, who certainly has a delightful sensation, analogous to what we experience in contemplating many objects of nature, speaks of a *beautiful* theorem.

The connoisseur in music applies the term, *beautiful*, to his favourite air ; the lover of poetry speaks of a beautiful poem ; and the painter discovers beauty in the design, and in the colouring of his pictures. We apply the term, *beautiful*, to experiments in the different departments of physics ; especially when the experiment is simple, and results in determining a point, which has occasioned doubt and dispute.

Also, in the contemplation of moral actions, we find the same feelings. The approbation, which we yield, when the poor are relieved, and the weak are defended, and any meritorious deeds of virtue are done, is not merely the cold assent of the head, but is always attended with a delightful movement of the affections.—So that all nature, taking

the word in a wide sense, is the province of beauty; the intellectual, and the moral, as well as the material world.

But a remark is to be made here of some consequence, in connection with some of the numerous speculations, that have been at different times offered on the subject of beauty. It has been thought by some, that the application of the term to any other objects than those of external nature, is wholly metaphorical.—In reply it may be said, that we do truly feel a delightful emotion on the contemplation of intellectual works, and when we observe virtuous actions, no less than when our attention is fixed upon the pleasing appearances of the natural world. And there is such an analogy, such a resemblance in the feelings in all these cases, that, if the term beauty be proper to express one, it is no less appropriate to all. Instead, therefore, of considering this term as metaphorical, whenever applied to any thing other than the external appearances of nature, it is better to speak of it, as a *common name*, expressive of a variety of emotions, arising on different occasions, but always pleasing, and varying rather in the occasions of their origin and in degree, than in their real nature.

In particular, they agree in their nature as to this; We refer all the emotions, which come under the denomination of beauty, to the objects, whatever they may be, which are found immediately and constantly to precede them. The charm of the mind, which exists solely in ourselves, seems to flow out and to spread itself over the severest labours of intellect, over the creations of the architect, over the fictions of the imagination, over virtuous moral actions, and whatever else we call beautiful, no less than upon those forms of material nature, which fill us with delight.

“Mind, mind alone—Bear witness, earth and heaven!”

“The living fountain, in itself contains

“Of beauteous and sublime! ———

§. 324. All objects not equally fitted to excite emotions of beauty.

In view of what may be said, BEAUTY may be described (although not strictly susceptible of definition.) as a plea-

emotion, excited by various objects, but which, in consequence of an early and tenacious association, is always felt by us, as if diffused over and existent in the objects, which excite it. An object, therefore, is called beautiful, when it is the cause or antecedent of the emotion of beauty. But no one can be ignorant, that not all objects cause the emotion; and of those, which do, some have this power in a greater, and some in a less degree. This brings to a very important inquiry. It is no unreasonable curiosity, which wishes to know, why the effect is so limited, and why all objects are not embraced in it? Why different objects cause the same emotion in different degrees? and why the same objects produce a diversity of emotions in different individuals, and even in the same individual at different times?

**25. A susceptibility of emotions of beauty an ultimate principle of our constitution.**

In answering these questions, something must be taken for granted, there must be some starting point; otherwise, that can be said, will be involved in inextricable confusion. That is, we must take for granted, that the mind has an original susceptibility of such emotions. Nor can we suppose, there can be any objection to a concession, which is warranted by the most general experience. We know, that we are created with this susceptibility, because we are all conscious of having had those emotions, which are attributed to it. And if we are asked, How, why it is, that the susceptibility at the bottom of these feelings exists, we can only say, that such was the will of the Being, who created the mind; and that this is one of the original or ultimate laws of our nature. (See §. §. 1, 22.)

Although the mind, therefore, is originally susceptible of emotions, as every one knows; still it is no less evident from the general arrangements we see both in physical and intellectual nature, that these emotions have their fixed causes or antecedents. We have seen, that these causes are not limited to one class or kind; but are to be found under various circumstances; in the exercises of reason-



ing, in the fanciful creations of poetry, in musical airs, in the experiments of physics, in the forms of material existence, and the like. As a general statement, these objects cannot be presented to the mind, and the mind be unmoved by it; it contemplates them, and it necessarily has a feeling of delight of a greater or less degree of strength.

In asserting, that this is correct as a general statement, it is implied, that some objects do not originally cause these emotions. And hence we are led to enter into more particular inquiries.

§. 326. Remarks on the beauty of forms.

In making that selection of those objects and qualities of objects, which we suppose to be fitted, in the original constitution of things, to cause within us pleasing emotions of themselves, independently of any extraneous aid, we cannot profess to speak with certainty. The appeal is to the general experience of men; and all we can do, is, to give, so far as it seems to have been ascertained, the results of that experience. Beginning, therefore, with material objects, we are justified by general experience in saying, that certain dispositions or forms of matter are beautiful; for instance, the CIRCLE.

We rarely look upon a winding or serpentine form, without experiencing a feeling of pleasure; and on seeing a circle, this pleasure is heightened. Hence Hogarth, in his ANALYSIS OF BEAUTY, expressly lays it down, that those lines, which have most variety in themselves, contribute most towards the production of beauty, and that the most beautiful line, by which a surface can be bounded, is the waving or serpentine, or that, which constantly, but imperceptibly, deviates from the straight line. This, which we frequently find in shells, flowers, and other pleasing natural productions, he calls the line of beauty. And was not Hogarth right in the opinion, that there is beauty in such outlines, whether they are the most beautiful or not? Refer it to any man's experience, and let him say, whether he gathers on the seashore wreathed and variegated shells or beholds through distant meadows the winding stream

He pauses in pathless woods to gaze on the flowing features of the rose, does he not at once feel within him a spontaneous movement of delight? Is not the object, which is directly before him, in itself a source of this feeling? Although he may have a superadded pleasure from some other source, as we shall have occasion to see; still, considering the subject particularly in reference to the object before him, is not this the true philosophy? He sees, and he feels; he beholds, and he admires. It results, therefore, from the common experience of mankind, that objects, which are circular, or approach that form, or exhibit an irregular, but serpentine outline, have a degree of beauty.

For similar reasons, we may be led to suppose, that a square figure has some original beauty, or is a cause of notions of beauty of itself, although less so than the circle. What the ground of the difference is, it is somewhat difficult to say, unless it be, that a circle, being more simple, makes a more direct and entire impression; whereas the attention is divided among the sides and angles of a square.

§. 327. Of the original beauty of colours.

We experience what may be termed an original emotion, which is pleasing, in beholding colours. We are able to allude to abundant sources in proof of this, without, however, entering into a full exposition of them.

(1) The pleasure, resulting from beholding the colour of objects merely, may be observed in very early life. Accordingly the infant soon directs its eyes towards the light, that breaks in from the window. The child rushes with extacy from flower to flower, comparing their brilliancy. He looks upward to the tree, that is most profusely loaded with blossom, or that is burdened with fruit of the deepest red and yellow. Unwearied, he pursues the butterfly, attracted by the brightness of its wings.

(2) It is found to be the same also universally among savages. Hence they decorate their bodies by painting; they value whatever dress they may have, in proportion to

the gaudiness of its colours; they weave rich and variegated plumes into their hair. And the same feeling, which has been so often noticed in Savages, may be observed also, though in a less degree, among the uneducated classes in civilized communities. In persons of refinement, the original tendency to receive pleasing emotions from the contemplation of colours seems to have, in a measure, lost its power, in consequence of the developement of tendencies to receive pleasure from other causes.

(3) We have another proof in persons, who have been blind from birth, but in after life have been restored by couching, or in some other way. "I have couched, (says Wardrop,\* speaking of James Mitchell,) one of his eyes successfully; and he is much amused with the visible world, though he mistrusts information, gained by that avenue. One day I got him a new and *gaudy* suit of clothes, which delighted him beyond description. It was the most interesting scene of sensual gratification I ever beheld."

But this person, it appears, had some faint notions of light and colours, previous to the operation, by which his powers of vision were more fully restored. And the facts, stated in connection with his exercise of this imperfect vision, are equally decisive in favour of the doctrine under consideration.

"At the time of life when this boy began to walk, he seemed to be attracted by bright and dazzling colours; and though every thing, connected with his history, appears to prove, that he derived little information from the organ, yet he received from it much sensual gratification. He used to hold between his eye and luminous objects such bodies, as he found to increase by their interposition the quantity of light; and it was one of his chief amusements to concentrate the sun's rays by means of pieces of glass, transparent pebbles, or similar substances, which he held between his eye and the light, and turned about in various directions. These too he would often break with

\* As quoted by Stewart in his Account of Mitchell. See §. 77.

his teeth, and give them that form, which seemed to please him most. There were other modes, by which he was in the habit of gratifying this fondness for light. He would retire to any out-house or to any room within his reach, shut the windows and doors, and remain there for some considerable time, with his eyes fixed on some small hole or chink, which admitted the sun's rays, eagerly catching them. He would also, during the winter nights, often retire to a dark corner of the room, and kindle a light for his amusement. On these occasions, as well as in the gratification of his other senses, his countenance and gestures displayed a most interesting avidity and curiosity."

The conclusion, which we deduce from these sources of proof, is, that colours are fitted, from our very constitution, to produce within us emotions of beauty.

§. 328. Of sounds considered as a source of beauty.

We next inquire into the application of these principles in respect to sounds. And here also we have reason to believe, that they hold good ; that certain sounds are pleasing of themselves ; and are hence, agreeably to views already expressed, termed BEAUTIFUL. Examine, for instance, musical sounds.—It is true, that in different nations, we find different casts or styles of music ; but, notwithstanding this, certain successions of sounds, viz. those, which have certain mathematical proportions in their times of vibration, are alone pleasing. As, therefore, not all series of sounds are beautiful, but only those of a particular character, and these are every where found to excite emotions of beauty without exception ; the presumption is that they possess this power originally ; they please us, because the mind is so formed, that it cannot be otherwise. It is possible, that the emotion may be small, but it undoubtedly has an existence in some degree, and can be accounted for in no other way.

§. 329. Of motion as an element of beauty.

Motion has sometimes been reckoned as an element of beauty ; but not every kind of motion. The motion of a

winding river pleases; and this, not only because the river is serpentine, but because it is never at rest. We are delighted with the motion of a ship, as it cleaves the sea under full sail. We look on, and are pleased without being able to control our feelings, or to tell, why they exist. With what happy enthusiasm we behold the foaming cascade, as it breaks out from the summit of the mountain, and dashes downward to its base! With what pleasing satisfaction, we gaze upon a column of smoke, ascending from a cottage in a wood!—It may be said, we are aware, that the pleasure arising from beholding the ascending smoke of the cottage, is caused by the favourite suggestions, which are connected with it, of rural seclusion, peace, and abundance. But there is much reason to believe, that the feeling would be to some extent the same, if it were known to ascend from the uncomfortable wigwam of the Savage, or the fires of a wandering horde of gypsies.

But there are some kinds of motion, for instance, whenever it is accelerated beyond a certain degree of swiftness, which cannot be said to be beautiful, but which, on the contrary, cause painful feelings. The same may be said of sounds. He, who walks abroad in the forest, is charmed with the melody of birds. But what melody would there be in the hissing of a concourse of serpents?

§. 330. Of the beauty of certain natural signs.

There are certain signs, expressive of feelings and of character, with which nature has furnished us. (See §. 144, 5.) It is true, they are not all beautiful; for instance, the frown, which is indicative of reproof and of the angry passions. This, therefore, causes pain. We have already had occasion to see, that these signs, whether pleasing or the opposite, may possess an appropriate meaning, and may excite emotions of themselves, and independently of experience.—One circumstance in favor of this view is that natural signs are interpreted at a very early period. A smiling countenance is a pleasing, (that is, a beautiful object,) not only to persons grown up, but to very young

In ordinary circumstances, we never behold it, young or old, without a feeling of satisfaction. We see, therefore, that a smiling countenance, although by one of the many forms or arrangements of matter originally beautiful.—And there is this consideration, that natural signs of whatever character us more than the mere declaration of those feelings which they are conceived to stand. A person, for example, he is happy; and having no evidence but his mere word, we are only pleased. But when his countenance is illuminated with smiles, we then revere him. Another tells us, he is wretched, and we believe him. But we see the flowing of tears, and then we are more profoundly sorrowful.—And thus we are made here also, how our Creator has given a voice to the forms of matter, which speaks to the soul.

§. 381. Of the beauty of moral actions.

views, which have been taken, will be found to consist of those pleasurable emotions, which arise, when we contemplate moral actions of a praiseworthy kind. If those theories, which deny an original susceptibility of moral emotions, and make all our moral judgments the result of experience and some sort of calculation, are true; then we might expect to find the perception of moral beauty perfect in mature age, but hardly having existence in youth and childhood. But this is not

the case. A child, that successively exults and weeps at the narrative of the ballad, has something within him, which decisively pronounces upon the character of those actions, which he is thus made acquainted with. He sympathizes with those, who are in suffering; he admires the virtuous; he abhors the unprincipled and the villain. His natural susceptibility, to say the least, is equally quick at the conduct of persons grown up in all cases, except in those cases, where he is not so well able, as persons of mature years, to see the full consequences of actions.

How kind then are the provisions of Nature, makes us to see beauty and deformity not only in lect, but in material forms! This corresponds w condition; we are not all mind; but part from heav part from earth, a mixture and kneading together c and clay. And it was no more than might well be ed, that God should give us feelings of pleasure disgust, of joy and of sorrow from both sources; n from the exhibitions of mind, but also from the un and original forms of matter.

§. 382. Of a distinct sense or faculty of beauty.

From the views, which have been taken, it m conjectured, that we adopt the opinion of those, w held, that there is a distinct SENSE or faculty of There have been some writers, among whom Mr. has included Hogarth and Winkelman, who have sed, that all emotions of beauty and sublimity are referred to a distinct sense; and, consequently, qualities, which are in general antecedent to tho tions, are the established and appropriate objects sense. By means of this sense or faculty of which seems to have been regarded as entirely an to the external senses of sight and feeling, the min riences the emotion of beauty constantly, or almo stantly, whenever a particular object is present. having this supposed sense, we can no more be the appropriate emotion, whenever the beautiful o presented, than we can be without sight or feeling our eyes are open to behold objects, or when ou are impressed upon them. And, moreover, the which is thus discovered, has, according to this sy precise and definite character, concerning which cannot ordinarily be any possible mistake.

There are some parts, undoubtedly, of this doct emotions of beauty, to which it is, by no means, ne to object. Its advocates hold, with good reason, th tain objects give us pleasure of themselves; and al the emotions arise in the mind at once, whenever t

presented to it, and, therefore, in some degree the when vision follows the opening of the eyelids. , it cannot be denied, that the analogy between ptibility of emotions of beauty, and the external ases.

pinion, that we have a distinct sense or faculty y, would give to its appropriate emotions a char-e exact and particular, than is justified by what to be the fact; there would in this case be no erence of opinion concerning the beauty and de-objects, than concerning their sensible qualities, e, sound, or colour. If this doctrine, taken in tent, were true, the peasant, who can tell, wheth-te of the apple be sweet or sour, and whether r of the clouds of heaven be bright or dark, can gment on the beauty of the works of nature and ss than persons of the most critical taste.

, therefore, we contend, that there is in the mind al susceptibility of emotions of beauty, it is to be as something quite different in its nature from nal senses; and these emotions, therefore, unlike tions, will differ, in kind and degree, with a va-ircumstances.

Objects may become beautiful by association merely.

; some of the forms, of which matter is suscepti-pleasing of themselves and originally, while we le to behold bright colours, and to listen to cer-ds, and to gaze upon particular expressions of the nce, and to behold praiseworthy actions, without , in a greater or less degree, delightful; it must ted, that, in the course of our experience, we iety of objects, that seem, as they are presented be unattended with any emotion; objects, that ctly indifferent. And yet these objects, howev-g in beauty to the great mass of men, are found ested, in the minds of some, with a charm, allow-their own.

; objects, which previously excited no feelings



beauty, may become beautiful to us in consequence of associations, which we attach to them. That is to say, when the objects are beheld, certain former pleasing feelings, peculiar to ourselves, are recalled.

The lustre of a spring morning, the radiance of a summer evening may of themselves excite in us a pleasurable emotion; but, as our busy imagination, taking advantage of the images of delight, which are before us, is ever at work and constantly forming new images, there is, in combination with the original emotion of beauty, a superadded delight. And if in these instances, only a part of beauty is to be ascribed to association, there are others, where the whole is to be considered, as derived from that source.

Numerous instances can be given of the power of association, not only in heightening the actual character of objects, but in spreading a sort of delegated lustre on those, that were entirely uninteresting before. Why do decaying houses appear beautiful to me, which appear different to another? Why are the desolate fields as if clothed with delight, while others see in them not that which is pleasant? It is, because that house formerly entertained me, as one of its inmates, at its fireside, and the fields were the scenes of many youthful sports. When I now behold them, after so long a time, the joyous recollections, which the remembrances of my early days call up within me, are, by the power of association, thrown around the objects, which are the cause of the recollections.

#### §. 334. Further illustrations of associated feelings.

He, who travels through a well-cultivated country, cannot but be pleased with the various objects which he beholds; the neat and comfortable dwellings in the meadows, that are peopled with flocks, and with herds of cattle; the fields of grain, intermingled with reaches of thick and dark forest. The whole scene is a beautiful one; the emotion we suppose to be partly original; and the association, on being restored to sight by couching for the ca-

and having had no opportunity to form associations with it, would witness it, for the first time, with delight. A greater part of the pleasure is owing to the social feelings, which arise, on beholding such a scene; these feelings are the abode of man; these fields are the place of his labours, and amply reward him for his toil; here are contentment, the interchange of heartfelt joys, and "an old truth."

Those, who have travelled over places, that have been marked by memorable events, will not suspect us of attributing too great a share of our emotions to association. It is true, that in a country so new as America, we are unable to point so frequently, as an European might do, to scenes, that have witnessed the gallantry and patriotism of ancient times. But there are some such consecrated spots. With whatever emotions the traveller may pass the banks of the Hudson, he cannot but find his feelings much more deeply arrested at Stillwater and at Saratoga, the scenes of the memorable battles of Sept. 19, Oct. 7, 1777, and of the surrender of Burgoyne, than in any other place. It was there, that brave men died; it was there, that an infant people threw defiance at a powerful enemy, and gave sanguinary proof of their determination to be free. A thousand recollections have gathered round such places, and the heart overflows with feeling at recalling them.

The powerful feeling, which here exists, whether we call it an emotion of beauty, or sublimity, or give it a name, expressive of some intermediate grade, is essentially the same, with that, which is caused in the bosom of the traveller, when he looks for the first time upon the hills of the city of Rome. There are other cities of greater extent, and washed by nobler rivers, than the one, which is before us; but upon no others has he ever gazed with such intensity of feeling. He beholds what was once the mistress of the world; he looks upon the ancient dwelling place of Cato, of Cicero, and of the Cæsars. The imagination is once peopled with whatever was noble in the character of great men, and great in the achievements of that extraordinary nation.

and there is a strength, a fulness of emotion, which, without these stirring remembrances, would be very sensibly diminished.

§. 335. Instances of national associations.

The influence of association in rousing up, and in giving strength to particular classes of emotions, may be strikingly seen in some national instances.—Every country has its favourite tunes. These excite a much stronger feeling in the native inhabitants, than in strangers. The effect on the Swiss soldiers of the *Ranz des Vaches*, their national air, whenever they have happened to hear it in foreign lands, has often been mentioned. So great was this effect, that it was found necessary in France, to forbid its being played in the Swiss corps in the employment of the French government. The powerful effect of this song cannot be supposed to be owing to any peculiar merits in the composition; but to the pleasing recollections, which it ever vividly brings up in the minds of the Swiss, of mountain life, of freedom, and domestic pleasures.

The English have a popular tune, called Belleisle March. Its popularity is said to have been owing to the circumstance, that it was played when the English army marched into Belleisle, and to its consequent association with remembrances of war and of conquest. And it will be found true of all national airs, that they have a charm for the natives of the country, in consequence of the recollections connected with them, which they do not possess for the inhabitants of other countries.

We have abundant illustrations of the same fact in respect to colours. The purple colour has acquired an expression or character of dignity, in consequence of having been the common colour of the dress of kings; among the Chinese, however, yellow is the most dignified colour, and evidently for no other reason, than because yellow is that which is allotted to the royal family. In many countries black is expressive of gravity, and is used particularly in seasons of distress and mourning; and white is a chear-

But among the Chinese white is gloomy, bec

it is the dress of mourners; and in Spain and among the Venetians black has a cheerful expression, in consequence of being worn by the great. So that the remark of Sir Joshua Reynolds has some foundation, that custom makes, in a certain sense, white black, and black white.

“It is custom alone, (says he,) determines our preference of the colour of the Europeans to that of the Ethiopians, and they, for the same reason, prefer their own colour to ours. I suppose no body will doubt, if one of their painters were to paint the goddess of beauty, but that he would represent her black, with thick lips, flat nose, and woolly hair; and it seems to me, he would act very unnaturally, if he did not.” (The Idler, No. 82.)

§. 336. Of utility as an element of beauty.

Some theorists, among others Mr. Hume, have imagined, that they were able to discover the origin or foundation of all emotions of beauty in the perception of utility; understanding by the term a fitness or adaptation of the beautiful objects to some important purpose. We certainly contemplate this quality with a degree of complacency and approbation. Many objects, when their use or adaptation to some purpose became known to us, have at once been clothed with an interest, which they did not before possess. A share, therefore, of our emotions of beauty may be traced to this source. But when the perception of utility or fitness is proposed, as the ground and origin of all of them, the doctrine evidently cannot be sustained. If this principle hold universally, it is considered a fair inference from it by Mr. Burke, that the wedge-like snout of the swine, with its tough cartilage at the end, and the general make of its head, so well adapted to digging and rooting, are extremely beautiful; and that hedge-hogs and porcupines, which are so admirably secured against all assaults by their prickly hides, can justly be considered creatures of no small elegance.

On the theory, therefore, which proposes the perception of utility, as the true ground of all emotions of beauty, is enough for us to say, that it goes too far. It does, in-

deed, in connection with the laws of association, suggest a happy explanation of many pleasing emotions, but, by no means, of all. The inferences of Burke in opposition to it are not without foundation.

§. 337. Of proportion as a cause or element of beauty.

There are some, who imagine, they find the source of beauty in a certain symmetry and determinate proportion of parts. This idea has been particularly advocated by artists, who seem to have supposed, that the elements of beauty might not only be discovered, but even measured in the great models of statuary and painting. Mr. Burke has examined this opinion also; directing his inquiries to vegetables, the inferior animals, and man. He has shown, that, in all cases, there are no certain measures, on which the beautiful can justly be said to depend.

For instance, in the vegetable creation we find nothing more beautiful than flowers, but there is a very great variety in their shape, and in the disposition of the parts, which pertain to them. In the rose the stalk is slender, but the flower is large. The flower or blossom of the apple, on the other hand, is very small, but the tree large. Now if one of these be in proportion, the other wants it; and yet, by general consent, both the rose and the apple-blossom possess beauty, and the bush of the one and the tree of the other allowedly present a very engaging appearance.—If again we inquire in respect to man, and in respect to the inferior animal creation, we are brought to the same result, viz. that beauty does not depend upon a fixed relative size of the parts, that is, upon proportion.

Those, who deem it important to examine every thing, that has been advanced on the subject, and find time for such minuteness of inquiry, may meet with various other theories of more or less value, and probably none of them, however unphilosophical, without some worth.

§. 338. Differences of original susceptibility of this emotion.

Supposing it to be true, that we possess an original susceptibility of emotions of beauty, independently of cu-

and of considerations of utility and proportion, it seems ever, to be the fact, that this susceptibility is found in different degrees in different persons. Let the beautiful objects be presented to two persons, and will be found to be not only affected, but ravished, were, with feelings of beauty; while the other will have the same kind of emotions, but in a very diminished degree.—A great degree of susceptibility of emotions of beauty is usually termed **SENSIBILITY**.

The differences of men in this respect may justly be sought, where we cannot account for it by any thing in their education or mental culture, to be constitutional. It is more strange, that men should be differently affected by the same beautiful objects in consequence of some difference of constitution, than that they should constitutionally have different passions, that one should be choleric, another of a peaceable turn, that one should be mild yielding, another inflexible.

§. 339. Emotions of beauty compared with others:

We stop here to notice one of the objections, which occur, to the views, which have been given on the subject of beauty. Supposing, as we do, that the mind originally certain tendencies to emotions of beauty, we fully admit the power of various circumstances in modifying and in some cases, of overcoming such original tendencies. Nor in point of fact, can it be denied, that the character of our feelings of beauty frequently changes; that what is regarded by us, as beautiful at one time, is not at another; what is beautiful in the eyes of one age or one nation, loses its lustre in the view of another. The objection is, that such changes of feeling in regard to the beautiful are inconsistent with an original susceptibility of such emotions.

The answer to be given is, that we experience analogous variations in all our emotions of whatever kind, as well as those of beauty. Take, for instance, that feeling which we are led to regard any thing as true or false. It will surely be admitted, that there is in the mind an

original tendency to assent to certain propositions, rather than others of an opposite kind. It cannot be supposed that the characteristic of mind, which leads us to regard one thing as true, and another as false, is something, which is wholly superinduced,—the result merely of accidental circumstances. But that, which is felt by us to be true to-day may be felt by us to be false tomorrow; because we have then new facts before the mind, and new sources of evidence are disclosed.—It is also well known, that our estimate of subjects, in a moral point of view, continually alter. Those objects, which appeared just, and worthy, and desirable in youth, have a different appearance in manhood, and again have a different aspect in old age. This is not because the mind alters, or the moral susceptibility; but because objects are seen by us under different lights. Changes of opinion, similar to what may be noticed in individuals, may also be clearly noticed in the moral, political, and religious history of different ages and nations.

Again, we find the same tendency to perpetual fluctuations in the feelings of cheerfulness and melancholy, of mere pleasure and pain, of desire and aversion, as well as of beauty, and grandeur, and sublimity. The reason is, we take different views of objects. And this is much the same as to say, that truly different objects are presented to the mind from what we had contemplated before; which is a cause amply sufficient for the changes we are remarking upon.

§. 340. Summary of views in regard to the beautiful.

As the subject of emotions of beauty is one of no small difficulty, it may be of advantage to give here a brief summary of some of the prominent views in respect to it.

(1) Of emotions of beauty it is difficult to give a definition, but we notice in them two marks or characteristics;—They imply 1st, a degree of pleasure, and 2dly, are always referred by us to the external object.

(2) No objects are beautiful of themselves, and independently of the soul, which contemplates them; but appear to have a degree of splendour or beauty in consequence

e of our having associated with them, constantly, from a very early period, the feelings, which exist in our minds.

) The feeling, which we term an emotion of beauty, is limited to natural scenery, but may be caused by works of art, by creations of the imagination, by the exertions of reasoning, and by moral actions. On all these the mind may reflect back the lustre of its own emotion, and make them beam out with a sort of splendour, which is not originally in the objects; and this is done in the same manner, as when we diffuse our sensations of colour, which are merely affections of the mind, over the objects, which we call red, white, yellow, &c.

) There is in the mind an original susceptibility of emotions in general, and of those of beauty in particular; but not only this, some objects are found, in the constitution of things, to be followed by these feelings of beauty, others are not; and such objects are spoken of as originally beautiful. That is, when the object is presented to the mind, it is of itself followed by emotions of beauty, without being aided by the influence of accessory or contingent circumstances.

) Without pretending to certainty in fixing upon objects, to which, what is termed original or primary beauty may be ascribed, there appears to be no small difficulty, in attributing it to certain forms, to sounds of a particular character, to bright colours, to certain expressions of the countenance, and to praiseworthy actions.

The whole amount, however, of the feeling of beauty, which flows from this source, is comparatively small.

) Many objects, which cannot be considered beautiful themselves, become such, by being associated with a recollection of former pleasing and enlivening recollections; and such, as possess beauty of themselves, may augment the pleasing emotions from the same cause. Also much difference of opinion, which exists as to what objects are beautiful, and what are not, is to be ascribed to association.—These are some of the prominent views resulting from inquiries into this subject.



## §. 341. Of picturesque beauty.

We apply the term **PICTURESQUE** to whatever of cause in us emotions of beauty, in which the beauty not consist in a single circumstance by itself, but considerable number, in a happy state of combination. The meaning of the term is analogous to the significance of some others of a like termination, which are derived from the Italian through the medium of the French. Mr. Stewart remarks of the word, *arabesque*, that it expresses something in the style of the Arabians; *moresque*, something, in the style of the Moors; and *grotesque*, something which bears a resemblance to certain whimsical decorations in a grotto or subterranean apartment at Rome. In like manner, *picturesque*, originally implies what is done in the style and spirit of a painter, who ordinarily places before us an object made up of a number of circumstances in such a state of combination, as to give pleasure.

The epithet may be applied to paintings, to architecture, to scenery, poetical descriptions, &c.—The following description from Thompson, which assembles together a number of the circumstances, attending the cold, frosty night of winter, is highly picturesque.

“Loud rings the frozen earth and hard reflects  
 “A double noise; while, at his evening watch,  
 “The village dog deters the nightly thief;  
 “The heifer lows; the distant waterfall  
 “Swells in the breeze; and with the hasty tread  
 “Of traveller, the hollow-sounding plain  
 “Shakes from afar.”

## CHAPTER TWENTY NINTH.

### EMOTIONS OF SUBLIMITY.

#### §. 342. Connection between beauty and sublimity.

THOSE emotions, which we designate as SUBLIME, are those of feelings, which have much in common with emotions of beauty; they do not differ so much in nature or, as in degree. When we examine the feelings, which under these two designations, we readily perceive, that they have a progression; that there are numerous degrees of intensity; but the emotion, although more vivid in one case than the other, and mingled with some foreign elements, is, for the most part, essentially the same. That it is, by no means, impossible to trace a connection even between the fainter feelings of beauty, and the overwhelming emotions of the sublime.

This progression of our feelings from one, that is gentle and pleasant to one, that is powerful and even painful, has been happily illustrated in the case of a person, who is used to behold a river at its first rise in the mountains, to follow it, as it winds and enlarges in the subjacent valleys, and to behold it at last losing itself in the expanse of the ocean. For a time the feelings, which are excited in him, as he gazes on the prospect, are what are called emotions of beauty. As the small stream, which hitherto played in the uplands and amid foliage, that at first hid it from his view, increases its waters, separates into links to a great distance from each other, and becomes a majestic river; his feelings are of a more powerful

kind. We often, by way of distinction, speak of the feelings existing under such circumstances, as emotions of grandeur. At last it expands and disappears in the immensity of the ocean; the vast illimitable world of billows flashes in his sight. Then the emotion, widening and strengthening with the magnitude and energy of the objects, which accompany it, becomes sublime.—Emotions of sublimity, therefore, chiefly differ, at least in most instances, from those of beauty in being more vivid and powerful.

§. 343. Of sublimity *a parte rei*.

There is neither beauty nor sublimity *a parte rei*, using a phrase, which has come down to us from the School. In saying, there is no sublimity of this sort, we mean, there is no sublimity, which has a permanent and unchangeable existence in all sublime objects, independently of the emotions, which we feel in the contemplation of them. Of those, who hold to the doctrine of a sublime of this description, the opinions are various. Although they all maintain, that sublimity is a quality existing alike in all objects, which are capable of producing the emotion, they are not all agreed as to what that particular quality is. According to one, it is the terrible; another makes it consist in the exertion of mighty power; according to a third, it is great altitude or vast extent.—We cannot agree, that there is any abstract sublimity of this kind. When we rightly consider the words, SUBLIMITY, and the SUBLIME, we shall regard them as merely common names, expressive of a certain character or trait in emotions, and nothing more. And of course they are applied to all those emotions, however they may differ in some other respects, in which that distinctive characteristic is found. The characteristic, to which we refer, is in no means easy of definition; although it is generally understood to imply great vividness and strength.

## §. 344. Occasions of emotions of sublimity.

It will aid in the better understanding of this subject briefly to mention some of the occasions, on which the feeling of sublimity arises.—Among other occasions, this emotion is found to exist, whenever it happens, that we have our attention called to objects of vast extent. Accordingly, mountains of great altitude, the celestial vault, when seen from high summits, vast plains, beheld from a commanding position, the ocean, &c., affect us with sublime emotions.

There is the same result in the contemplation of all objects, which indicate great exertions of power; even when we have but very confused notions of that energy, which we know to be somehow put forth. Nothing can be more sublime, than a volcano, throwing out from its bosom, clouds, and burning stones, and immense rivers of lava. The ocean, greatly agitated with a storm, and tossing the largest navies, as if in sport, possesses an increase of sublimity, on account of the more striking indications of power, which it at such a time gives. The shock of large armies also is sublime. But in these instances, as in most others, the sublime emotion cannot be ascribed solely to one cause; something is to be attributed to vast extent; something to the original effect of the brilliancy or darkness of colours; and something to feelings of dread and danger.

We often experience emotions of sublimity in witnessing objects, that move with very great swiftness. This is one source of the feelings, which we have, at beholding bodies of water rushing violently down a cataract. For the same reason, the hurricane, that hastens onward with irresistible velocity, and lays waste whatever it meets, is sublime. And here also we find a cause of part of that same emotion, which we feel on seeing at a distance electric fluid, darting from the cloud to the earth.

## §. 345. Sublimity in actions or moral sublime.

This emotion is also found to accompany certain actions of men; and here we find term-

ed MORAL SUBLIME.—We in general regard those human actions as sublime, which are not only praiseworthy; but which are put forth under such circumstances, as very strongly to excite our feelings. So that we here also see the progression from the beautiful to the sublime, the same as in the beautiful and sublime of the natural world. The benevolent man is a pleasing or beautiful object, but when in the pains and agonies of death, he requests with his dying breath, that the poor may be fed from his substance, the exercise of benevolence under such circumstances strongly excites our feelings, and becomes an instance of moral sublime.

Whenever we look abroad upon men, and witness the trait of unconquerable fortitude, whenever we behold great self-possession in sudden and fearful emergencies, or see a readiness to share voluntarily in another's sufferings, or become acquainted with other moral excellencies of a like kind, we cannot but experience a strong emotion. It is not easy to communicate an exact notion of this feeling, except perhaps in the circumstance of its great strength. It is evident, however, that it is closely analogous to that agitation and expansion of the soul, which exists, when we contemplate what is vast, and terrible, and mighty in nature.

§. 346. No objects sublime of themselves.

But objects are not sublime, any more than they are beautiful in themselves; in both cases, it is the mind of man and that alone, which gives them the sublimity, they seem to possess of their own nature. The hurricane, the cataract, the lightning, when resolved into their elements are only a number of contiguous atoms. And yet it seems to be unalterably fixed in the constitution of things, that we cannot behold them without strong feeling. The emotions, which we feel, are diffused by us over the objects that are their cause or more properly are antecedent to them; and this diffusion will be found to be all, that constitutes their sublimity.—There is a similar diffusion

own emotions over objects of our contemplation, that instances of the moral sublime.

§. 347. Sublime objects have some elements of beauty.

We have seen, that a regular progression may, in most instances, be traced from the beautiful to the sublime. It is, therefore, to follow, that instances of the sublime on the removal of some circumstances, possess more or less of the beautiful. And this, on examination, will be found to be generally the case. Take, as an example, the shock of powerful armies, which is confessedly a sublime scene. We have only to remove the circumstance of slaughter; and at once the regular order of the troops, their splendid dress and rapid movements, together with floating of banners and the sound of music, are exceedingly picturesque and beautiful; nothing more so.

And all this is none the less beautiful, when thousands are engaged and dying in actual contest; although the painful emotion, consequent on witnessing a scene of slaughter, so much overpowers the sense of the beautiful, that it appears even not to have an existence. If the engagement between the armies should be without the accompaniments of military dress, and without order, and without strains of music, but a mere struggle between man and man, with arms as came readiest into their power, the scene, however destructive, would be any thing, rather than sublime.—Diminish the force of the whirlwind to that of a gentle breeze, and as it playfully sweeps by us, we feel an emotion of pleasure, which is an element of the beautiful. And so when the mighty cataract is dwindled down to the cascade, we shall discover, that the tumultuous emotions of the sublime are converted into the gentler feelings of beauty. The same effect will be found to follow in instances of the moral sublime.

But it will be asked, was there any thing of moral beauty in Marius, the blood-thirsty Roman chief?—And when we see him sheltered amid the ruins of Carthage, even from his greatness, but retaining the conqueror's pride, there is something in it of sublimity. In reply

may be said, that when we experience in this instance the moral sublime, we fix our attention upon a particular trait of character ; and do not wander over the whole life of the man. The trait here is fortitude ; and, consequently, we may discover in this, and in all similar instances, gradations of emotion. Whenever we see an individual cheerful, and happy, and composed in ordinary difficulties and pressures, such an individual is undoubtedly an object of moral beauty. But let these misfortunes be increased, let him be driven from home and country, let the world, as it were, be combined against him, and the man, who, in such circumstances, betrays no diminution of fortitude, but holds up an unshaken stability of soul amid the blackness of the desolations around him, is a sublime object. We shall feel the emotion, whatever may be his character, because our attention is fixed not upon the whole man, but upon a particular trait ; and that trait will be found, when exhibited in a less striking degree, to be a beautiful one.

However true it may be, as a general statement, that sublimity implies some elements of the beautiful, it is not necessary to assert, that this is *always* the case. Perhaps in some instances it is not. As an illustration, some will think, it is not very evident, that barren heaths and sandy plains of small extent have any portion of beauty ; and still when they are spread abroad before us to great extent, and especially when seen from the summit of some elevated object, they may have a considerable degree of the sublime. The statement given is meant as a general one, admitting certainly of but few exceptions.

#### §. 348. Of emotions of grandeur.

For all the various emotions, of which we are now speaking, as they rise from the lowest to the highest, we have the two general terms, BEAUTY, and SUBLIMITY. There is, however, another form of expression, which is, with some good reason, putting forth its claim to be received into use ; viz. *emotions of grandeur*. We may happily apply this phraseology to various objects, which we know, whether to class with the beautiful or sublime ;

too much of fulness and expansiveness for the former, too little of power for the latter. The meandering river is beautiful; as it becomes deeper and wider, it assumes an appearance not of beauty, but of grandeur; but ocean only is more than either, is sublime.

§. 349. Of the original or primary sublimity of objects.

If there be a connection between the beautiful and the sublime, if beauty, grandeur, and sublimity are only names of various emotions, not so much differing in kind, as in degree; essentially the same views, which were advanced with respect to beauty, will hold here. It will follow, that the contemplation of some objects is attended with emotions of beauty, independently of associated feelings; or, in other words, if they have a primary or original beauty, there are objects also originally sublime. Hence we conclude, that whatever has great height, or great breadth, or vast extent, or other attributes of the sublime, will be able to excite in us emotions of sublimity of themselves, independently of the subordinate or secondary aid, arising from any connected feelings. We have much ground for regarding this as a correct supposition. We have good reason to believe, that our Creator has appointed certain objects, or perhaps we should say, certain forms or conditions of objects, as antecedents to THE SUBLIME within us.

§50. Considerations in proof of the original sublimity of objects.

It may be inferred, that there is such primary or original sublimity, not only in view of the connection, which has been stated to exist between the beautiful and the sublime, but because it is no doubt agreeable to the common experience of men. But in resting the proposition, (where undoubtedly it ought to rest,) on experience, we must inquire, as in the former chapter, into the feelings of the young. And this, for the obvious reason, that, when persons are somewhat advanced in age, it is difficult to separate the primary from the secondary or associated sublimity. - They have then become inextricably mingled together.



er.—Now take a child, and place him suddenly on shores of the ocean, or in full sight of darkly wooded mountains of great altitude, or before the clouds and thunders of volcanoes ; and, in most cases, he will be filled with sublime emotions ; his mind will swell at the perception ; it will heave to and fro, like the ocean in a tempest. His eye, his countenance, his gestures indicate a power of internal feeling, which the limited language he can command is unable to express. It may well be stated as a fact, because it has been frequently noticed by those, who are competent to observe.

Again, if a person can succeed in conveying to a child by means of words sublime ideas of whatever kind, similar emotions will be found to exist, although generally in a less degree, than when the objects are directly presented to the senses. By way of confirming this, a statement from the younger Lord Lyttleton, who seems to have been usually a person of much sensibility, may be appealed to. "Of all the poets (says that writer) who have graced ancient times, or delighted the latter ages, Milton is my favourite. I was quite a boy, when, in reading *Paradise Lost*, I was so forcibly struck with a passage, that I laid down the book with some violence on the table, and took an hasty turn to the other end of the room. Your curiosity may naturally expect to be gratified with the passage in question. I quote it, therefore, for your reflection and amusement."

"He spake ; and to confirm his words, out-flew

"Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs

"Of mighty Cherubim ; the sudden blaze

"Far round illumined Hell.\*

§. 351. Influence of association on emotions of sublimity.

Granting, that the sublime emotion is in part originally still a great share of it is to be attributed to association. As an illustration, we may refer to the effects of sound. When a sound suggests ideas of danger, as the report of artillery, and the howling of a storm ; when it calls

\* Letters of the late Lord Lyttleton, xxvi.

collections of mighty power, as the fall of a cataract, and the rumbling of an earthquake, the emotion of sublimity, which we feel, is greatly increased by such suggestions. Few simple sounds are thought to have more sublimity, than the report of a cannon; but how different, how much greater the strength of feeling, than on other occasions, whenever we hear it coming to us from the fields of actual conflict! Many sounds, which are in themselves inconsiderable, and are not much different from many others, to which we do not attach the character of sublimity, become highly sublime by association. There is frequently a low feeble sound, preceding the coming of a storm, which has this character.

“ Along the woods, along the moorish fens,

“ Sighs the sad genius of the coming storm,

“ Resounding long in fancy’s listening ear.

*Thompson’s Winter.*

It is sometimes the case, that people, whose sensibilities are much alive to thunder, mistake for it some common sounds, such as the noise of a carriage, or the rumbling of a cart. While they are under this mistake, they call these sounds as sublime; because they associate with them all those ideas of danger and of mighty power, which they customarily associate with thunder. The hoot of the owl at midnight is sublime chiefly by association; also the scream of the eagle, heard amid rocks and deserts. The latter is particularly expressive of fierce and lonely dependence; and both are connected in our remembrances with some striking poetical passages.

§. 352. Further illustrations of sublimity from association.

The same results will be found to hold good in other cases. The sight of broken and heavy masses of dark clouds, driven about by the wind, is sublime. But how much more fruitful of emotion to those, who, in the days of Fingal and Ossian, saw them, in their piercing imaginations, peopled with the ghosts of the dead; with the assemblies of those, whose renown had continued to live long after their bodies had mouldered!——“ Temora’s

woods shook with the blast of the inconstant wind. A cloud gathered in the west. A red star looked from hind its edge. I stood in the wood alone ; I saw a gh on the darkened air ; his stride extended from hill to h His shield was dim on his side. It was the son of Semo

A view of the Egyptian pyramids animates us w sublime emotions ; it is impossible to behold such v efforts of human power, and be unmoved ; but the streng of these feelings is increased by means of the solemn collection, that they have stood unshaken, while successive generations have flourished and perished at their feet and by their being connected with many ideas of ancient magnificence, of unknown kings, and with numerous incidents in the history of a people, once famous for opulence and the arts, but now no longer an independent nation. Mount Sinai in Arabia Petræa is a rocky pile of considerable altitude, and like other summits must have always excited some emotion in those, who beheld it ; but when it is seen by a Christian traveller, the sublime emotion is greatly increased by the recollection of the important place, which this summit holds in the history of the Jews, and of its consequent connection with the belief and the hopes of all those, who embrace the religion of the Saviour.

REFERENCES. LONGINUS, DE SUBLIMITATE ; Buffon, First Truths, Pt. I. CH. XIII., (*Inquiry in what true beauty consists ;*) Burke on the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful ; Hume on the Principles of Morals, sect. v., (*Why utility pleases ;*) J. G. Cooper's Letters concerning Taste ; Stewart's Philosophical Essays, Pt. II. ; Kant, Kritik der Urtheilskraft, Theil I. ABSC. I. ; Sir Joshua Reynold's Discourses, III, VII. ; Hogarth's Analysis of Beauty ; Hutcheson's Introduction to Moral Philosophy, CH. I. §. 8. ; Beattie's Illustrations on Sublimity / *Alcibiades* on Taste ; Brown, Lects. LIII—LVIII.

\* Ossian, Epic Poem of Temora, Bk. I.

## CHAPTER THIRTIETH.

### OF IMAGINATION.

§. 353. Definition of the power of imagination.

**I**MAGINATION is a complex exercise of the mind, by means of which various conceptions are combined together, so as to form new wholes. The conceptions have properly enough been regarded as the materials, from which the new creations are made; but it is not until after the existence of those mental states, which are implied in imagination, that they are fixed upon, detained, and brought out from their state of singleness into happy and beautiful combinations.

Our conceptions have been compared to shapeless ones, as they exist in the quarry, which “require little more than mechanic labour to convert them into common dwellings, but that rise into palaces and temples only at the command of architectural genius.” That rude, and little more than mechanic effort, which converts the shapeless stones of the quarry into common dwellings, may justly be considered, when divested of its metaphorical aspect, a correct representation of this mental property, as it exists among the great mass of mankind; while the architectural genius, which creates palaces and temples, is a well-furnished and sublime imagination of poets, painters, orators, &c.

Imagination is a complex mental operation; implying the exercise of the power of association in furnishing those conceptions, which are combined together; also the ex-

ercise of that susceptibility, by which we perceive the relations of things, sometimes called relative suggestion. Nor is this all that is necessary, as will hereafter more fully appear.

§. 354. The creations of imagination not entirely voluntary.

The opinion, that even persons of the most ready imagination can form new imaginary creations, whenever they choose, by a mere volition, however widely it may have prevailed, cannot be maintained. To will, or to exercise a volition, always implies a mental determination, a choice. In accordance with the common opinion, we will suppose, that a person wills, or chooses, to imagine an ocean of melted brass, or an immense body of liquid matter, which has that appearance. The statement itself evidently involves a contradiction. It is certainly impossible for a person to will to imagine any thing, since that precise thing, which he wills to imagine, must already be in his mind at the time of such volition. He wills, for instance, to imagine a sea of melted brass; but of what meaning or what utility is this volition, when he has already imagined the very thing, which this language seems to anticipate as future? Whatever a person wills, or rather professes to will to imagine, he has already imagined; and consequently, there can be no such thing as entirely voluntary imaginations.

§. 355. Of imaginations not attended with desire.

The creations, which we form by means of the power of imagination are of two kinds, those attended with desire, and those which are not. It is the latter kind, which we speak of in this section.—There is hardly any mind so wanting in intellectual wealth as not to find clusters of associated conceptions, groups of images often arising in itself. They seem to come upon us, as it were, unbidden; and to combine themselves in a variety of proportions, presenting new, and perhaps grotesque figures. But, although this varied presentation of floating imagery have the appearance of occupying the mind in an accident

manner, it all arises, and is regulated by the laws of association. No image whatever occurs, which has not some connection with the state of the mind, which preceded it. In using these expressions however, we would not be understood to imply, by the connection asserted, any thing more than this, that one intellectual state, in certain given circumstances, follows another, agreeably to an original law or principle of our constitution established by its Maker. But although we truly have here instances of the exercise of imagination, it is not of that higher and effective kind, which gives birth to the creations of poetry, and painting, and the other fine arts.

§. 356. Of imaginations attended with desire.

While there are some combinations, the result of imagination, which are formed without any accompanying emotion of desire, there are some, where desire, or intention of some sort, clearly exists. It is of cases of this last mentioned kind that we are accustomed to think, when with those intellectual susceptibilities and states, to which, considered conjointly, we give the name of imagination, we associate the idea of effective power or the ability to create. It is this frame of mind, which exists in every attempt at composition in prose and verse, where the subject admits of lively images and appeals to the passions.

It may assist us in understanding this species of imagination, if we endeavour to examine the intellectual operations of one, who has sat down to write, whether the intended production be of a poetic or other kind.

A person cannot ordinarily be supposed to sit down to write on any occasion whatever, without having some general idea of the subject to be written upon already in the mind. He, accordingly, commences the task before him with the expectation and the desire of developing the subject more or less fully, of giving to it not only a greater continuity and a better arrangement, but an increased interest in every respect. And it may be the case, that many circumstances, indirectly relative to the effort of composition, such as the anticipated approbation or disappro-

bation of the public, have an affect greatly to fix and increase the emotion of interest or desire. The feeling of desire, when compared with some other emotions, is found to possess a superiour degree of permanency. And as, in the instance which we are now considering, the desire or feeling of interest is intimately connected with the general conception of the subject before the mind, the effect of this connection is a communication of the permanency, originally belonging solely to the desire, to the general idea or outlines of the subject, which the writer is to treat of. The conception, therefore, of those outlines loses in this way the fleeting and ever-varying nature of other conceptions, and becomes fixed. The lineaments of the anticipated treatise remain in their length, breadth, and proportions, permanently held up to the writer's view.

Spontaneous conceptions continue, in the mean while, to arise in the mind, on the common principles of association; but as the general outline of the subject remains fixed, they all have a greater or less relation to it. And partaking in some measure of the permanency of the outline, to which they have relation, the writer has an opportunity to approve some and to reject others, according as they impress him as being suitable or unsuitable to the nature of the subject. Those, which affect him with emotions of pleasure, on account of their perceived fitness for the subject, are retained and committed to writing, while others, which do not thus affect and interest him, soon fade away altogether.

Whoever carefully notices the operations of his own mind, when he makes an effort at composition, will probably be well satisfied, that this account of the intellectual process is very near the truth.

It will be recollected, therefore, that the exercise of imagination in the composition of any theme, which admits of it, is not the exertion of merely a single intellectual ability. It is the developement of various feelings and susceptibilities; of desire, of the principle of suggestion or association, and of judgment or relative estimation : consequence of which a feeling of relative

or unfitness arises, on the contemplation of the conditions, which have spontaneously presented themselves.

§. 357 Further illustrations of the same subject.

We first think of some subject. With the original sight or design of the subject, there is a co-existent desire to investigate it, to adorn it, to present it to the examination of others. The effect of this desire is to keep the real subject in mind; and, as the natural consequence of a power of association, various conceptions arise, in any way or other related to the general subject. Of some of these conceptions we approve in consequence of their proved fitness to the end in view, while we reject others on account of the absence of this requisite quality of adaptableness or fitness.

For the sake of convenience and brevity we give the name of IMAGINATION to this complex state or series of operations of the mind. It is important to possess a single term expressive of the complex intellectual process; otherwise as we so frequently have occasion to refer to it in conversation, we should be subjected, if not proper to a circumlocution, at least to an unnecessary multiplication of words. But while we find it so much for convenience to make use of this term, we should be careful not to impose upon ourselves, by ever remembering that it is the name, nevertheless, not of an original independent faculty, which of itself accomplishes all, as has been mentioned, but of a complex state or of a series of states of the mind. A single further remark may be added in illustration of the process of the mind in literary composition. It has been seen, to how great a degree the efforts of this kind depend on the laws of association. When, therefore, a person has sat down to write, it may be expected, that he has furnished himself with pen and ink, and that he has books around him. The presence of these and other things, subordinate to the writer's general undertaking, constantly reminds him, by the operation of the same laws, of the subject before him, and re-



cals his attention, if he discover any disposition to differ from it.

§. 358. Remarks from the writings of Dr. Reid.

Dr. Reid (ESSAY IV. ch. 4.) gives the following ical statement of the selection, which is made by the latter from the variety of his constantly arising and developing conceptions.

“ We seem to treat the thoughts, that present themselves to the fancy in crowds, as a great man treats [courtiers] that attend his levee. They are all aimed at his attention. He goes round the circle, bestowing upon one, a smile upon another ; asks a short notice of a third, while a fourth is honoured with a particular conference ; and the greater part have no particular notice of attention, but go as they came. It is true, he sets no mark of his attention to those, who were *not there* ; he has a sufficient number for making a choice at the instant.”

§. 359. Grounds of the preference of one conception to another.

A question after all arises, on what principle the mind enabled to ascertain that congruity, or incongruity, fitness or unfitness, agreeably to which it makes the selection from its various conceptions. The fact is admitted that the intellectual principle is successively in a series of different states, or, in other words, that there are successive conceptions or images, but the inquiry still remains why is one image in the group thought or known to be more worthy than any other image, or why are any images combined together in preference to any two others. The answer is, it is owing to no secondary law, but to an instantaneous and original feeling of approbation or disapprobation. Those conceptions, which, according to this original power of approving or disapproving, are found to be suitable to the general outlines of the subject, are preferred. Those images, which are perceived to possess a greater congruity and fitness for each other, are preferred as new and more beautiful combinations.

others, although no directly voluntary power is exerted over either class, are neglected, and soon become lost. But no account of this vivid feeling of approval or disapproval, of this very rapid perception of the mutual consistency of the images for each other or for the general impression of the subject, can be given, other than this, that with such a power, the original author of our intellectual susceptibilities has been pleased to form us.

30. Mental process in the formation of Milton's imaginary paradise.

What has been said can perhaps be made plainer, by considering in what way Milton must have proceeded, in forming his happy description of the garden of Eden. First formed, in the first place, some general outlines of the subject; and as it was one, which greatly interested him, the interest, which was felt, tended to keep these outlines steadily before him. Then, the principles of association, which are ever at work, brought up a great number of conceptions, having a relation of some kind to the general features; such as conceptions of rocks, and mountains, and rivers, and green leaves, and golden fruit. The next step was the exercise of that power, which we call the power of perceiving relations, which has sometimes been designated as the susceptibility or power of relative suggestion. By means of this he was at once able to determine whether the conceptions, which were suggested, were suitable to the general design of the description and consistent with each other, and whether they would have, when combined together to form one picture, a pleasing effect. Accordingly, those, which were judged most suitable, were retained together as parts of the imaginary creation, and detained and fixed by means of that feeling of interest, which was at first exercised towards the more prominent outlines merely; while others speedily disappeared from the mind. And thus arose an imaginary landscape, more interesting, more perfect, than we can ever expect to find realized in nature.

§. 361. Limitations of imagination by the condition of the senses.

The power of imagination depends in some measure on the number and condition of the senses. If Milton had been blind from infancy, it cannot be supposed, that he would have been able to have formed that beautiful combination, the description of Paradise. Had he possessed the sense of seeing only in an imperfect degree, furnished, for instance, with only those glimmerings of sight, which persons sometimes possess before being couched for the cataract, he would not have been able to have done it, at least to the degree of perfection, in which the description appears at present.

A person undertakes to describe a battle, who has always been deaf; and in order that he may enjoy every facility for the execution of his plan, he places himself on some eminence, where he can overlook those military manoeuvres and conflicts, the description of which he anticipates giving. He gives us an account of the number engaged, of the position occupied, of the military dress, of the valour of different corps; but it was to him, as he beheld it, and it is to us, as we read it in his description, only a noiseless scene. A deathlike silence prevails. The word of command flies from rank to rank, and we hear it not. The hoofs of war-horses beat the earth, and we perceive the motion, without a perception of the noise of their tread. We witness the flashes of cannon on the hills of the battle, but while we feel the trembling of the earth, no sound reaches us. What an inadequate conception must a person, who does not possess the sense of hearing, have of many of those circumstances, which inspire others with emotions of pleasure and sublimity!

Similar remarks will apply to those cases, where there is a failure in any other sense.—We read of a philosopher, who attempted to give a blind man a notion of scarlet colour. The philosopher assured him, that it yielded a lively and pleasant sensation; that it was an emblem of courage; & being considered ornamental to them, was worn by kings and princes. Having specified these and some other things, connected with this colour, he then asked the

blind man, whether he had any idea of scarlet? The blind man replied, that he thought he had some notion of it, and that he supposed, it must be more like the sound of a trumpet, than any thing else in the world.

But it will be asked, how does it then happen, that men born blind, frequently talk of visible things with great readiness and propriety? When they with propriety apply epithets to objects of colour, such conversation must be the effect of memory. They repeat what they have heard others say. For, if they are perfectly blind, they certainly can have no idea of what is meant by colours; being as ignorant of them as any man whatever is of the phenomena of the world of spirits.

In their efforts, (which, in consequence of their unhappy condition, they undoubtedly often make,) to form a conception of light, their ideas must always be conformed, in a great measure, to the knowledge, they already possess by means of the other senses. And it must consequently be very erroneous, as there is certainly nothing in the nature of light, analogous to the nature of sound, or of taste, or of smell.

§. 362. Explanation of the case of the poet Blacklock.

In connection with the remarks, which have already been made on the limitation of imagination by the state and condition of the senses, it seems proper to say something in explanation of the case of the poet Blacklock.

Thomas Blacklock, a poet, and a minister of the established church of Scotland, lost his sight in consequence of a disease at five months of age. It does not come within our plan to repeat in this place his interesting and instructive history, any further than to say that, notwithstanding the great misfortune, under which he laboured, he made such advances in learning as to merit the reputation of a philosopher as well as of a poet. "I am acquainted, (says Dr. Beattie, referring to Blacklock,) with a person, who, having at the age of five months lost his sight by the small-pox, retains not the idea of any thing visible; and is yet a good poet, philosopher, and divine, a

most ingenious as well as a most worthy man. He dreams too as frequently as other people, and dreams are universally ascribed to the fancy; and his writings prove, that he possesses, what every critic will allow to be, and what Addison himself would have called, a sublime imagination."

In the remarks before made, we find a solution, in some measure, of his poetical ability. He was undoubtedly a person of natural capacity superiour to that of most men; and possessed in particular of no small share of poetical sensibility. Giving loose to the ardour of his imagination, he was led to treasure up in his memory, from conversation and from hearing works read, the words, WHITE, BLACK, PURPLE, and others, descriptive of the colour of objects. His general accuracy, in the application of them, may be accounted for in this way. He had acquired in the same way, that he had acquired the words themselves, those associations, which people in general are in the habit of attaching to such colours, as have been mentioned. With the word, WHITE, for instance, although it could not suggest to him the idea of that colour, he associated the ideas of cheerfulness and innocence; with the word, PURPLE, the ideas of splendour and majesty; with the word, BLACK, the qualities of gloom and melancholy. It is not, therefore, wholly unaccountable, that he should have been able to speak of the "*purple*" dawn, or of "*dark*" woodland scenery, although he at the same time was without any correct notions of the primary significations of these terms.

§. 363. Works of imagination give different degrees of pleasure.

Different persons receive different degrees of pleasure from works of imagination. The fact is well known. Something may be said in explanation of it, in reference to poetry; which is one of the creations of the power, we are considering. And the same explanation will apply in part to other efforts of the imagination.—Although poetry is generally looked upon to be a useful and pleasing art, we find, that all have not the same relish for its beauties. The pleasure, which is felt by a reader of poetry, will in great measure depend upon two circumstances, (1) the confer

imity of his experience to the things described, (2) the liveliness of his own imagination.

The pleasure received will depend, in the first place, on the conformity of the reader's experience to the things described.—Accordingly, if the scene of a poem be laid within the limits of a commercial city, if it deal chiefly in the description of the habits of the people residing there, and of their various turns of fortune, it will excite but comparatively little interest in those, who have been brought up wholly amid retired and rural scenes. And when, on the other hand, the scene of it is laid in the country, when it deals in the toils, and sorrows, and joys of country life, it excites comparatively little interest in those, who have never had any actual experience of that kind. Burn's *Cotter's Saturday Night* is an admirable poem; but it is exceedingly more pleasing to those, who can clearly perceive, from what they have themselves seen and heard and felt, its accurate conformity to nature, than to those, who cannot.

The pleasure, which is felt by a reader of poetry, will depend also in part on the liveliness of his own imagination.—In poems the different parts are only imperfectly filled up; some describe more minutely than others; but the most minute describers only trace the outlines. These remain, therefore, to be filled up by the reader. But the ability to do this is found in very different degrees in different persons; some very rapidly and admirably finish the picture, and others do not. The latter, consequently, remain, in a considerable degree, unaffected, and perhaps condemn the poem as deficient in interest; while the former read it with great feeling and pleasure.—This statement accounts for the fact, that the same poem gives to different persons different degrees of satisfaction; and also, inasmuch as it requires in all cases some power of imagination in the reader, explains the circumstance, that so many appear to be utterly destitute of any relish for the beauties of the poetic art.

## §. 364. Utility of the creations of poetry, painting, &amp;c.

Some have questioned the utility both of the poetic and of the other fine arts.—It is evident, that the benefits and evils of poetry, whatever they may be, cannot be accurately pointed out, without the separate consideration of each department, into which the art is divided. The elegy, lyrics, the epic, pastorals, descriptive and didactic poetry, and the tragedy, all have their different laws; they aim, in some measure, at different objects, and cannot be judged of on precisely the same principles. But as the consideration of each department separately cannot be attempted, a few general remarks must answer.

Poetry preserves the recollection of early days. When we are nigh having every finer feeling entirely blunted by the cares and interests of life, it revives before us a youth of innocence, confidence, and affection. In doing this, it tells us, we must not give up all to the world, and that if we would be happy and beloved, we must yield something to the cultivation of the moral sensibilities. This is one benefit.—Poetry dwells with enthusiasm on the works of nature. It makes us acquainted with the blue mountains, the “gray old trunks” of trees, the voice of floods; and while it holds up the beauties of nature, it secures a yet higher object, in more fully revealing to us the character of the author of nature. And here is another good result.

Poetry may be said to be the book of the passions. It paints man without reserve; both his good and bad qualities. It describes his truth, his gratitude, and his magnanimity; and, on the other hand, discloses with equal freedom the unworthy passions of pride, self-seeking, envy, revenge. The benefit here is, not merely that the passions, are made known, but that it is done with such precision, with such truth, and strength.—Further, poetry realizes by anticipation those restless and expansive desires, which we find naturally in the soul. He, who scrutinizes the operations of his mind, will observe it full of activity; it is ever struggling against the bounds, which limit it; as if fully conscious of its in-

mortal destiny, it not only looks forward to something new, but to something greater, and higher, and nobler. And hence it enters with joy into those bright creations, those new worlds, which it is the prerogative of poetry to form; and they seem to it a congenial residence.

Most of these considerations in favour of the poetic art will apply also to painting. These are truly sister arts; they require, in the performance, a kindred genius; their object is essentially the same. Poetry indeed addresses itself to the ear, and painting to the sight; but both are addressed to the imagination. And the success in either case will depend greatly on the degree, to which the imagination is awakened up.—Other fine arts, music, sculpture, architecture, as well as poetry and painting, are arts of the imagination. They are addressed to it, and are founded on it. They may all be equally misapplied and perverted. But when applied, as they ought to be, it is no less evident, that they indicate a laudable progress of the human mind, and may contribute to men's convenience and enjoyment.

§. 365. Of misconceptions by means of the imagination.

But while it is safe to admit, that the imagination may be made subservient to valuable purposes, it is no less true, that it may sometimes mislead us. The following are instances among others, where this is the result.

Our admiration of the great may be reckoned a prejudice of the imagination. We are apt to suppose them possessed of personal attractions, and of the highest happiness; and not only this, to invest them with every worthy moral attribute. “The misfortunes, (says a late writer,) of Mary, Queen of Scots, and of her descendant, Prince Charles Edward, commanded the sympathy, the love, and the enthusiasm of millions. In the cause of these princes, how many have joyfully sacrificed life, though neither of them was worthy or capable of reigning! How many labour still to blot out every stain from their memory! And yet every individual in the circle of his own private friends and acquaintances, is



doubtedly find many persons more distinguished for virtue, for good principles, for integrity of character, than the prince for whom he is willing to lay down his life; but a friend, a private man, is invested with none of those attributes, always dazzling but often false, which are calculated to strike the imagination."

Our imaginations mislead us also in respect to war, whenever we contemplate it at a distance, and do not feel its effects at our own firesides and homes. We delight to dwell upon the idea of mighty power, which it suggests; we recollect to memory the homage and plaudits, which have been given to the brave; we combine together conceptions of all, that is stirring in music, and brilliant in equipage. In a word, it is a kindling imagination, seizing upon some imposing circumstances, that leads multitudes into deplorable mistakes as to the character of that great scourge of the human race.—Again; the power of imagination often gives a wrong colouring to future life. It is here as in some prospects in natural scenery,

"Tis distance lends enchantment to the view.

Whatever may be our present evils, we imagine there is good to come. We rush forward in the pursuit of it like children, who set out with spirited emulation, expecting to grasp in their hands the splendours of the rainbow, that appears to them to rest upon the neighbouring hills.

§. 366. Explanation of the above misrepresentations of the imagination.

But how happens it, that this faculty so often misleads us? What explanation can be given?

The answer is, that the mind turns away with a natural aversion from whatever causes it pain or uneasiness; delighted to dwell on the elements of beauty and sublimity, and in general on all scenes, which excite in it pleasant emotions. As there is, therefore, more or less in all actual situations, which causes dissatisfaction, we shall always find, in every condition, in which we are placed, something, which detracts from what we imagine.

—comp. The elements which are not

and near us, we must know ; Our situation forbids an attempt at the concealment of them. Every day forces the lesson of human adversity on our attention. But when we look abroad from the reality, which exists at home, from the cares and sorrows, which are ever near at hand, to other scenes and prospects, we do not think of trial and disappointment, because we are not obliged to. We fix our attention upon those circumstances, which appear most favourable and interesting ; and, consequently, know nothing of the uneasiness and misery, which actually exist in the imaginary Paradise of our creation.—For instance, we are apt to associate, as has been remarked, with persons in very high stations in life, the ideas of unalloyed happiness, of moral excellence, of manliness and beauty of form ; but while men in the most exalted stations have no less a share than others of bodily deformities and suffering, they have still greater anxieties ; their hours of sorrow are often more numerous than those of any other class of persons. It was well inquired by King Henry in Shakespeare,

“What infinite heart’s ease must kings neglect,

“That private men enjoy ?——

“And what have kings, that privates have not too,

“Save ceremony, save general ceremony ?

And under the direction of the same mental tendency, by which we are led to mark the elevations without noticing the depressions of the great men of the earth, we are led also to see the sublimities and hide from our sight the degradations and miseries of war, to behold the sunshine of the future, but no clouds.

§ 367. Feelings of sympathy aided by imagination.

But where the imagination is not at liberty to fix itself exclusively upon pleasing circumstances, the results as to the degree of creative power are the same, although they are of a different kind. In the one case, it forms creations of beauty, magnificence, sublimity ; in the other, it is equally efficacious in combining images of gloom and suffering. Hence a quick imagination is no

small aid in the exercise of the sympathetic feeling. Accordingly, when two men, the one a person of feeling, the other not, meet a poor man, who has been reduced to poverty, they will be found to have different degrees of sympathy for him. The latter will pity the unfortunate man; but the former will do more. He will think of his former situation; he will follow him to his dwelling; he will see in his "private eye" the tears of his family; in a word, he will, as a general statement, have more feeling for all individuals suffering, and, consequently, be more likely to lend aid to alleviate it.

Thus, in Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*, he is in some circumstance to think of a captive in one of the French State Prisons. He gives the reins to his imagination; "and looks through the twilight of the grate to take the picture.—I beheld, (says he,) his body wasted with long expectation and confinement, a sad, what kind of sickness of the heart it is, which arises from hope deferred. Upon looking nearer, I saw him pale and feverish. In thirty years, the western breeze had turned his blood. He had seen no sun, no moon, in that time; nor had the voice of friend or kinsman been heard through his lattice.—His children—But here my heart began to bleed, and I was forced to go on with a part of the portrait."

§. 368. Remarks on taste in the fine arts.

Closely connected with the subject of imagination, of emotions of beauty and sublimity, is that of taste in the fine arts.—TASTE is a habit of correctly judging of beauty and deformity in works of art, founded on the existence of emotions.—We find all men formed with a different degree of susceptibility, with some share of feeling for the view of the appearances of external nature: some strike them as pleasing; others as displeasing. We notice the development of this susceptibility of emotion in children, who show an attachment for some objects and dislike for others; at one time are pleased, at an

pained. The most stupid peasant lingers to behold the clouds, that brighten in the setting sun ; and at his rude fireside listens with pleasure to old tales and ballads.

As no man is without feeling, we all begin after a time to ascribe certain characteristics to objects, answering to those emotions, which have been excited in us. We set down some as pleasing, others as displeasing ; some as beautiful, others as deformed ; and others as possessing the marks of grandeur and sublimity. That is, we form a judgment of objects, founded on the emotions, which we experience.

We do not ordinarily speak of the works of nature as objects of taste ; they excite in us emotions of various kinds ; but in general we employ the term *TASTE*, in reference to the fine arts.—A man may be said to have a taste in the arts, who, from a careful study of the emotions, that have been excited in himself or others on various occasions, can tell, with a considerable degree of accuracy, what works will be found generally pleasing, or the opposite.—This implies, that he will readily seize upon the great characteristics of the work, whatever it is, of which he judges ; and being able to point out its prominent excellencies and defects, he can be expected to give the general character of the painter, poet, sculptor, &c. on whose production he may happen to be remarking.

Thus a man of taste in painting gives us the following idea of the character of Rubens. His figures, as we learn from him, were not always drawn with so much care and with such studied correctness, as those of some other painters. His superiority lies not in an attitude or any peculiar expression, but in the general effect, in the genius, which pervades and illuminates the whole. The works of some other painters are the effect of great labour and pains ; and, with very few defects, are after all spiritless and insipid ; but those of Rubens seem to have come from his hand with ease and freedom, and are full of spirit. The brilliancy of his colours, and their application to each other, the flowing freedom of his delineation, and the vigour of his pencil keep alive the atten-

make him feel a degree of that enthusiasm, with which the painter himself was carried away.—This was Sir J. Reynolds's opinion of Rubens.

§. 369. Characteristics &c. of a good taste.

In connection with the illustrations above given, we may lay down two characteristics of a good taste.

The first is CORRECTNESS. The province of correctness of taste is the detection of blemishes. The taste, that has this quality, does not mistake deformities for beauty, and is not likely to be imposed upon by counterfeits, however well executed.—A second characteristic is DELICACY. A person of delicacy of taste notices those more refined beauties, which are perceived only by cultivated minds. It marks the latent, as well as the more obvious excellencies.

It is worthy of notice, that the judgments, which a person of taste passes upon works of art, are rapid; he often forms an opinion of them instantaneously. When it is remembered, that taste is not a distinct faculty, but a power, which is acquired, this circumstance deserves some notice. It is explained, however, in the definition, which has been given, viz. Taste is the HABIT of judging correctly, &c.

The influence of practice, in giving quickness to our mental operations, was considered in the chapter on Intellectual Habits. The skilful accountant can tell, by a mere glance of the eye, the sum of a long column of figures. The practised military engineer estimates with almost intuitive readiness the fitness or unfitness of a spot of ground for encampments and fortifications. It is the same in the decisions of TASTE. The person, who has this quality in a good degree, is impressed with the excellencies and defects of a production in the arts at once. That is, he takes in at a glance the various circumstances, which go to constitute beauty or deformity with such quickness, that it is to be a single perception.

## CHAPTER THIRTY FIRST.

### OF WIT AND HUMOUR.

#### §. 370. Emotions of the ludicrous.

**W**E shall not be in a way to give a correct idea of WIT and HUMOUR, without briefly examining another class of our feelings, viz. *emotions of the ludicrous*. It is difficult to give precise definition of this feeling, although, when we analyze it, we find it to be complex, embracing an emotion of surprise, also of quick and playful delight. But the pleasing part of the emotion receives a peculiar modification, and one, which cannot be fully conveyed in words, in consequence of our perception of some incongruity in the person or thing, which is the cause of it.

#### §. 371. Occasions of emotions of the ludicrous.

But what are the true occasions of emotions of the ludicrous? In answer, we say, that this feeling is never experienced, except when we notice something, either in thoughts, or in outward objects and actions, which is unexpected and uncommon. That is to say, whenever this emotion is felt, there is always an unexpected discovery by us of some new relations.—But then it must be observed, that the feeling in question does not necessarily exist as a consequence of the discovery of such relations merely. Something more is necessary, as may be very readily seen.

Thus, we are sometimes, in the physical sciences, presented with unexpected and novel combinations of the properties and qualities of bodies. But whenever we dis-

cover in those sciences relations in objects, which were not only unknown, but unsuspected, we find no emotion of ludicrousness, although we are very pleasantly surprized. Again, similes, metaphors, and other like figures of speech imply in general some new and unexpected relations of ideas. It is this trait in them, which gives them their chief force. But when employed in serious compositions, they are of a character far from being ludicrous.—Hence we infer, that emotions of ludicrousness do not exist on the discovery of new and unexpected relations, unless there is at the same time a perception, or supposed perception of some incongruity or unsuitableness. Such perception of unsuitableness may be expected to give to the whole emotion a new and specific character, which every one is acquainted with from his own experience, but which, as before intimated, it is difficult to express in words.

§. 372. Of Hobbes' account of the ludicrous.

There has not been an entire uniformity on the subject of emotions of the ludicrous. It would seem, that Hobbes (HUMAN NATURE, CHAP. IX.) considered feelings of this kind, as depending on a modification of mere pride in a comparison of ourselves with others to our own advantage. He says of laughter, which, when considered in reference to the mind and independently of the mere muscular action, is nothing more than a feeling of the ludicrous, that it is "a sudden glory, arising from a sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves, by comparison with the infirmity of others, or with our own formerly."—To this notion of the origin of this class of our feelings, there are some objections; viz.—(1) In many instances we have the feeling in question, when there is evidently no discovery of any infirmity, either in the witty person, or in the subject of his wit, over which we can ourselves triumph with any good reason.—(2) Further, if the doctrine, which resolves the emotions of ludicrousness into a proud comparison of ourselves with others, were correct, it would follow that the most proud and self-conceited men would be least disposed to mirth and sociability, which we do not find

ie fact.—According to Hobbes' notion of the origin  
ese feelings, we have only to go into the company of  
most ignorant and stupid, if we wish to be exceedingly  
y. In such company we could not fail to be sensible  
me eminency in ourselves, in comparison with the in-  
ties of others. We should here be in a situation, cor-  
onding to his definition of laughter, but there can be  
oubt, that multitudes would be but very little inclined  
dolge that feeling in the midst of such associates.  
But while we cannot receive this writer's account of the  
ng in question, we may undoubtedly be well agreed in  
ect to it, as far as this;—There is an emotion of sur-  
s, combined with a quick and playful delight of a pe-  
ur kind, and this emotion arises on the discovery of  
pected relations of ideas, and the perception or ap-  
nt perception of some incongruity.

§. 373. What is to be understood by wit.

We apprehend, that an emotion of the ludicrous is al-  
t, in a greater or less degree, experienced in all instan-  
of wit, as the term is generally understood at the pres-  
ime. We are, therefore, led to this definition of it;  
consists in suddenly presenting to the mind an assem-  
e of related ideas of such a sort as to occasion feelings  
e ludicrous.—This is done in a variety of ways;  
among others in the two following.

74. Of wit as it consists in burlesque or in debasing objects.

The first method, which wit employs in exciting the  
ng of the ludicrous, is, by debasing those things, which  
ompous; that is, those things which have an appear-  
of greater weight and gravity, than they are truly en-  
d to. Descriptions of this sort are termed burlesque.  
An attempt to lessen what is truly and confessedly se-  
and important, has in general an unpleasant effect,  
different from that, which is caused by true wit.  
n the practice of burlesque, as on all other occasions  
it, there is a sudden and uncommon assemblage of re-



lated ideas. Take as an instance the following comparison from Hudibras ;

" And now had Phœbus in the lap  
 " Of Thetis taken out his nap ;  
 " And, like a lobster boiled, the morn  
 " From black to red began to turn.

Of a similar kind are those instances, in which objects of real dignity and importance are coupled with things mean and contemptible, although there is no direct and formal comparison made. As in this instance from the above-mentioned book ;

" For when the restless Greeks sat down  
 " So many years before Troy-town,  
 " And were renowned, as Homer writes,  
 " For well-soled boots, no less than fights.

In these instances we have related ideas. In the first there is undoubtedly an analogy between a lobster and the morning, in the particular of its turning from dark to red. But however real it may be, it strikes every one, as a singular and unexpected resemblance. In the other passage, it is not clear, that Butler has done any thing more than Homer in associating the renown of the Greeks with their boots, as well as their valour. But to us the connection of ideas is hardly less uncommon, and singular, not to say incongruous, than in the former.

§. 375. Of wit when employed in aggrandizing objects.

The second method, which wit employs in exciting emotions of the ludicrous, is by aggrandizing objects, which are in themselves inconsiderable. This species of wit may be suitably termed *mock-majestic* or *mock-heroic*. While the former kind delights in low expressions, this is the reverse, and chooses learned words, and sonorous combinations. In the following spirited passage of Pope, the writer compares dunces to gods, and Grub-street to heaven.

" As Berecynthia, while her offspring vie  
 " In homage to the mother of the sky,  
 " Surveys around her in the blest abode  
 " An hundred sons, and every son a god :

"Not with less glory mighty Dulness crowned,  
 "Shall take through Grubstreet her triumphant round;  
 "And her Parnassus glancing o'er at once,  
 "Behold a hundred sons, and each a dunce.

his division of wit, are to be included those instances where grave and weighty reflections are made upon trifles. In this case, as in others, the ideas are in respects related, or have something in common; but the coupling of them is so curious and unexpected, that it does not observe it without considerable emotion.

"My galligaskins, that have long withstood  
 "The winter's fury and encroaching frosts,  
 "By time subdued, (*what will not time subdue!*)  
 "An horrid chasm disclose.

There are various other ways, in which ideas are connected together, so as to excite in us that emotion, which we whatever we term witty.—It is worthy of remark that many sayings, which would otherwise have appeared witty, lose their intended effect, whenever we are led to suspect, that they were premeditated. Hence an observation or allusion, which would be well received in conversation, would often be insipid in print; and it is for this reason, that we receive more pleasure from a witty remark, than a witty attack.—From this circumstance it appears, that part of the complex feeling, which follows a witty saying, is an emotion of vivid pleasure or admiration, lessening the power of the witty person in bringing together peculiar combinations of thought.

#### §. 376. Of the character and occasions of humour.

we generally apply the terms, *humour*, and *humorous*, to the descriptions of a particular character, whether written, or used in conversation.—We find among men what appears to us a disproportion in their passions; for instance, they are noisy and violent, but not durable. We find inconsistencies, contradictions, and disproportions in their actions. They have their foibles, (hardly any one is without them,) such as self-conceit, caprice, foolish partialities, jealousies, &c. Such incongruities in feeling and

action cause an emotion of surprise, like an unexpected combination of ideas in wit. Observing them, as we do, in connection with the acknowledged high traits and responsibilities of human nature, we can no more refrain from an emotion of the ludicrous, than we can on seeing a gentleman of fine clothes and high dignity making a false step, and tumbling into a gutter. A person, who can seize upon these specialities in temper and conduct, and set them forth in a lively and exact manner, is called a man of humour; his descriptions are humorous descriptions. Addison has given many examples of the humorous in the incidents and characters of the *Tatler* and *Spectator*. But excellence in this species of writing is not very frequently found, and is an attainment of considerable difficulty. In general it implies something peculiar in the character of the writer. There are some persons, who seem to have a natural inclination for noticing those traits in the feelings and actions of men, which cause ludicrous emotions. Whatever may be the cause of it, there can hardly be a question as to the fact, that some possess this characteristic more than others. This was particularly true of Swift, and the same characteristic has been ascribed to Fontaine. Writers, who have a natural turn of this sort, will be more likely to excel in the humorous, than others.—See Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, Bk. I, ch. III. ; Beattie on *Laughter and Ludicrous Composition*, &c.

## CHAPTER THIRTY SECOND.

### SYMPATHETIC IMITATION.

§. 377. Of the propensity to imitation in general.

**T**HERE seems to be in human nature a propensity to imitation.—Children are early found to observe with care what others do, and to attempt doing the like. They are greatly aided by this propensity in learning to talk. It is not without long continued efforts, in which they are evidently sustained by the mere pleasure of imitation, that they acquire the use of oral language. At a little later period, we find the same propensity at work. Ever busily engaged, they frame houses, erect water-works, and lay out gardens in miniature. They shoulder a cane for a walking-stick; practise a measured step and fierce look; and become soldiers, as well as gardeners and architects, before they are men. So universal and effective is this propensity, that it may well be called natural.

But it is the particular object of this chapter, without entering into the subject of imitation in general, to consider that form of it, which is called Sympathetic.—In Sympathetic Imitation there is commonly understood to be more or less of feeling, which is expressed by the countenance, gestures, or other external signs. There is also communication of this feeling to others; they experience similar emotions. And these emotions are expressed, on the part of the sympathetic person, by similar outward signs. That is to say, in this form of imitation we both act and feel as others; and this, in consequence of what we witness in them.

## §. 378. Familiar instances of sympathetic imitation.

Abundance of instances, (many of them frequent and familiar.) show, that there is something of this kind; that there is in human feelings, and in the signs of those feelings, a power of contagious communication, by which they often spread themselves rapidly from one to another.

"In general it may be remarked, (says Stewart,) that whenever we see, in the countenance of another individual, any sudden change of features; more especially, such a change as is expressive of any particular passion or emotion; our own countenance has a tendency to assimilate itself to his. Every man is sensible of this when he looks at a person under the influence of laughter, or in a deep melancholy. Something, too, of the same kind, takes place in that spasm of the muscles of the jaw, which we experience in yawning; an action which is well known to be frequently excited by the contagious power of example. Even when we *conceive*, in solitude, the external expression of any passion, the effect of the conception is visible in our own appearance. This is a fact of which every person must be conscious, who attends, in his own case, to the result of the experiment; and it is a circumstance, which has been often remarked with respect to historical painters, when in the act of transferring to the canvass the glowing pictures of a creative imagination."\*

To these statements, illustrative of sympathetic imitation, may be added that of a mob, when they gaze at a dancer on the slack rope. They seem not only to be filled with the same anxiety, which we may suppose to exist in the rope-dancer himself; but they naturally writhe, and twist, and balance their own bodies, as they see him do. It has also been frequently remarked, that when we see a stroke aimed and just ready to fall upon the leg or arm of another person, we naturally shrink, and draw back our own leg or arm. Hysterical paroxysms are said to have been sometimes produced at witnessing the exhibition of the

\* Stewart's Elements, Vol. III. Ch. II.

ietic parts of a drama. And even the convulsions of  
 epsy have been excited by the mere sight of a person  
 cted with them.

§. 379. Of sympathetic imitation in large multitudes.

It has been often noticed, that the power of sympa-  
 tic imitation has been rendered intense, nearly in pro-  
 tion to the numbers assembled together.—In a large  
 y, if the voice of triumph and joy be raised in a single  
 amn, it immediately extends through the whole. On  
 other hand, if a single column be struck with panic,  
 exhibit external signs of terrouer by flight or other-  
 e, the whole army is likely to become rapidly infected.  
 There are the same results in large popular assemblies.  
 e art of the orator introduces a common feeling, which  
 ws simultaneously in their bosoms. Soon some one,  
 er sustained by weaker nerves or under the influence  
 stronger internal impulses, gives signs of bodily agita-  
 1. Those, who sit nearest, will probably next imbibe  
 contagion; which spreads and increases, until the  
 ole assembly is in a tumult. The spread of this sympa-  
 tic communication will be particularly rapid, if the first  
 tances of emotion and action are of a decided and  
 ong character.—The statements, which have been  
 de, are matters of common observation, and can hardly be  
 posed to have escaped the notice of any. But there  
 various other facts on record of a less common char-  
 er, although involving essentially the same principles.

§. 380. Of the animal magnetism of M. Mesner in connection  
 with this subject.

About the year 1784, M. Mesner of Vienna professed  
 perform various and important cures by what he called  
 mal magnetism. As this new mode of healing was  
 roduced into France, and much interest was felt on the  
 object, Louis the Sixteenth appointed a number of per-  
 is to examine into it; among whom were Lavoisier,  
 illy, and Dr. Franklin, at that time American min-  
 er at Paris. On inquiry it appeared, that it was

common in the process to assemble a considerable number of patients together. The patients were placed round a circular box or bucket of oak, the lid of which was pierced with a number of holes, through which there issued moveable and curved branches of iron. These branches were to be applied by the patient to the diseased part. The commissioners, who were witnesses to these proceedings, found that no effect was produced at first. The patients usually sat an hour and sometimes two, before the crisis came on ; being connected with each other meanwhile by means of a cord passed round their bodies. At length some one, wearied and nervous, and with feelings evidently much excited, was thrown into extraordinary convulsions. And in a short time the whole body of patients became similarly affected, in a greater or less degree. But the commissioners themselves, after having witnessed these singular results, consented to become the subjects of these experiments in their own persons. But they testify, that no effect was produced upon them. They also aver, when the process was gone through on persons alone, the same effects were not produced, as when a number were together, provided the attempt were made for the first time. In the following extract they seem to attribute the results partly to imagination, and partly to sympathy; that is to say, to Sympathetic Imitation.

“ The magnetism, then, (the commissioners remark,) or, rather, the operations of the imagination, are equally discoverable at the theatre, in the camp, and in all numerous assemblies, as at the bucket ; acting, indeed, by different means, but producing similar effects. The bucket is surrounded with a crowd of patients ; the sensations are continually communicated and recommunicated ; the nerves are at last worn out with this exercise, and the woman of most sensibility in the company gives the signal. In the meantime, the men, who are witnesses of these emotions, partake of them in proportion to their nervous sensibility ; and those, with whom this sensibility is greatest, and most easily excited, become themselves the subjects of a crisis.

“ This irritable disposition, partly natural and partly

ed, becomes in each sex habitual. The sensations ; been felt once or oftener, nothing is now necessary recal the memory of them, and to exalt the imagi- to the same degree, in order to operate the same . The public process is no longer necessary. You nly to conduct the finger and the rod of iron before ntenance, and to repeat the accustomed ceremonies. ny cases, the experiment succeeds, even when the t is blindfolded, and, without any actual exhibition signs, is made to believe that they are repeated as ly. The ideas are re-excited ; the sensations are uced ; while the imagination, employing its accus- instruments, and resuming its former routes, gives o the same phenomena.”\*

81. Instance of sympathetic imitation at the poor-house of Haerlem.

altitudes of other facts, equally well attested, show npathetic connection between mind and mind ; and mpathy between the mind and the nervous and mus- system. Few are more interesting, or decisive than s stated to have occurred at Haerlem under the in- on of Boerhave.—“ In the house of charity at em, (says the account,) a girl, under an impression or, fell into a convulsive disease, which returned in r paroxysms. One of the by-standers, intent upon ng her, was seized with a similar fit, which also re- l at intervals ; and on the day following, another was ed ; then a third, and a fourth ; in short, almost the of the children, both girls and boys, were afflicted hese convulsions. No sooner was one seized, than ht brought on the paroxysm in almost all the rest at ne time. Under these distressing circumstances, ysicians exhibited all the powerful antepileptic med- with which their art furnished them ; but in vain. hen applied to Boerhave, who, compassionating tched condition of the poor children, repaired to

\* *des Commissaires chargés par le Roi, de l'Examen*  
*Animal, (as quoted by Stewart.)*



Haerlem; and whilst he was inquiring into the manner of them was seized with a fit, and immediately several others attacked with a species of epileptic convulsion. It presently occurred to this sagacious physician that the best medicines had been skilfully administered, and that the propagation of the disease from one to another appeared to depend on the imagination, [the sympathy of imagination,] by preventing this impression upon the mind, the disease might be cured: and his suggestion was successfully adopted. Having previously apprized the patients of his views, he ordered, in the presence of the children, that several portable furnaces should be placed in different parts of the chamber, containing burning coals, and that iron, bent to a certain form, should be placed over the furnaces; and then he gave these further directions, that all medicines would be totally useless, and that the only remedy with which he was acquainted, was, that the patient who should be seized with a fit, whether boy or girl, should be burnt in the arm, to the very bone, by a red-hot iron. He spoke this with uncommon dignity and gravity, and the children, terrified at the thoughts of this cruel punishment, when they perceived any tendency to the recurrence of the paroxysm, immediately exerted all their strength of mind, and called up the horrible idea of the burning, and were thus enabled, by the stronger mental impression, to resist the influence of the morbid propensity."

It may be added, that not only those in the same family, and in the same building, have been seized; but contagion has sometimes spread from one to another, (not the mere imitation of sympathy as we suppose,) over great towns, and even large districts of country. This was the case in a part of the island of Anglesey, in 1796; and also later in this country, in some parts of Tennessee.\*

§. 382. Practical results connected with the foregoing

As sympathetic imitation is a part of our constitution, we may well suppose it has its beneficial ends. But it is evident from the facts, which have been given, that it

\* See Edinburgh Medic. and Surg. Journal, Vol. III. p. 44

be attended with results of a different kind. Hence direction has sometimes been given by physicians, that a intercourse with persons, subject to convulsive attacks, is not to be unnecessarily indulged in, especially by those who are inclined to nervous affections. And this precautionary rule might be extended to other cases; for instance, of madness. "It is a question (says Stewart in the letter already referred to) worthy of more attention than yet been bestowed upon it by physicians, whether certain kinds of insanity have not a contagious tendency, somewhat analagous to that which has just been remarked. At the incoherent ravings and frantic gestures of a madman have a singularly painful effect in unsettling and changing the thoughts of others, I have more than once experienced in myself; nor have I ever looked upon this as afflicting of all spectacles, without a strong impression of the danger to which I should be exposed, if I were to witness it daily. In consequence of this impression, I have always read, with peculiar admiration, the scene in Tragedy of Lear, which forms the transition from the king's beautiful and pathetic reflections on the storm, to the violent madness in which, without any change whatever in his external circumstances, he is immediately after presented. In order to make this transition more gradual the poet introduces Edgar, who, with a view of concealing himself from Lear, assumes the dress and behaviour of a madman. At every sentence he utters, the mind of the king, "*whose wits,*" (as we are told in the preceding scene,) were "*beginning to turn,*" becomes more and more changed, till at length every vestige of reason vanishes completely."

§. 383. Application of these views to legislative assemblies.

We have before had occasion to remark, that the effects of sympathetic imitation have been experienced in public assemblies; and we may here add, when these effects have been strongly marked, they have almost always been beneficial. In all political deliberative assemblies, external signs of approbation and disapprobation

should be in a great degree suppressed. There is generally enough in the subjects, which are discussed, to excite the members, without the additional excitement (to use the phrase of Buffon) of "*body speaking to body*." It is as if the famous Athenian tribunal of the Areopagus, that held their deliberations in the night, in order that the attention might not be diverted by external objects, without expressing an opinion on this practice, it is certainly not unwise to guard against the terrible influence under consideration; otherwise truth, honour, and justice will often be sacrificed to feeling. Every public deliberative assembly has probably furnished facts, illustrating the propriety of this caution.

Not to mention others, it will be enough to allude to the National Assembly and the National Convention in France. In those legislative bodies we hear of his murmurs, exclamations, applauses, looks and gestures of defiance, cries of congratulation or of outlawry, banter and laughter, public embraces, together with an occasional display of flags, poniards, and pistols.—Let this course be pursued in such large assemblies, and a suitable regard to truth and rectitude is necessarily banished; there will be continual uproar and confusion, as history abundantly shown; and the affairs of the nation can long be administered with any degree of success. The framers of the government of the United States had a clearer insight into human nature. Although they had anticipated as a common thing such vulgar exhibition of passion, as were witnessed in the Revolutionary Assemblies of France, still they supposed it might occasionally happen. To prevent the evil results of a state of things equally degrading to the national dignity and adverse to its peace, they divided the Legislature into the two houses of the Senate and Representatives. The former, as it was rightly judged, being few in number and of greater age and experience, would operate as a salutary control on the more numerous and less experienced and, therefore, the more sympathetic and convulsive materials of the latter.

## CHAPTER THIRTY THIRD.

### OF INSTINCTS.

#### §. 384. Of the meaning of the term instinct.

**I**T may be given as a definition of instinct, that it is a natural and invariable tendency to do certain things, without previous forethought and deliberation.—Instincts are found both in men, and in the inferiour animals; particularly in the latter, as they are furnished with the power of reasoning only in a very small, if in any degree. The instincts of animals, by means of which they are taught to employ their powers of offence and defence, and to which we can trace such ingenious results as the ball of the silk-worm, the house of the beaver, &c., are among the most pleasing parts of the study of natural history. Particularly so, because they strikingly illustrate the care of that Being, who assures us, that not a sparrow falls to the ground without his notice. By giving them instruments, or rather helps, adapted to their situation, He has virtually given them food, and raiment, and barns, and houses.

#### §. 385. Of instinctive feelings in the human species.

Man, possessed of the power of comparing, abstracting, generalizing, and reasoning, does not stand in need of instincts to the degree, in which they are necessary to the brute creation. But, although tendencies of this kind are generally acknowledged to exist in the human species, it is not certain how far they exist, nor in what particu-

er, seems to be thought clear, that they are both fewer in number, and also more restricted in the degree of their power, than in the brute species.

In making inquiries on the subject as to what are instinctive feelings in the human species, and what are not, two things should be kept in view.—Instincts are to be considered as distinct from the automatic or mechanical actions of the bodily system, such as the contraction and dilatation of the chest and lungs in breathing by the motion of certain muscles. Automatic actions have a cause, but the cause is not in the mind, and is no part of the mental structure. They rise solely from the bodily mechanism.—Further, instincts are to be distinguished from our natural appetites, and other mere animal feelings. Thus, hunger, and thirst in a child are not instincts, but the disposition, which it exhibits in the earliest period of its existence, to gratify those wants in a particular way, is justly thought instinctive. Accordingly, we may lay it down as a general statement, that while the appetites and some other animal sensations imply a feeling of want; *instinct*, in distinction from them, is the principle which leads to their gratification.

Some have thought, that there are instinctive feelings of a higher kind, than those, which lead men to relieve their animal wants; such as the feelings, or rather passions of fear and anger, the desires of wealth and society, of knowledge and power, also our benevolent and sympathetic feelings. Some of these supposed instinctive tendencies deserve consideration.

§. 386. Of the desire of society, considered as an instinctive feeling.

The desire of society has been reckoned among the instinctive principles of our nature. This, we imagine, cannot be done without violence to the usual acceptation of language. An instinctive principle always has a particular object in view, and is borne forward to that particular object without being counteracted. The desire of society is natural, and is greatly promoted by the circumstances of our situation. Men find themselves dependent

on each other ; and their enjoyment and security being promoted by entering into society, they are of course led to seek it. Nevertheless it is true, if the mother flee into the wilderness, and nourish her child apart from all other human beings, he will grow up wild, untractable, and like the son of Hagar, "his hand will be against every man's hand." Although he feels lonely and desolate, and there is a void within him, which nothing but society can fill, he continues in solitude, until his fears are subdued, or his necessities compel him to seek associates. This would not be the case if the desire of society were instinctive, in the common acceptation of that term. We may, therefore, call it a propensity, but not an instinct ; a natural, but not an invariable or mechanical tendency.

§. 387. Of the desire of knowledge and of power, considered as instinctive feelings.

The desire of knowledge has also been set up, as an instinctive feeling.—Men are undoubtedly led to seek knowledge, both because it is natural, and because they are unable to do without it. But having acquired so much of it as answers for their present turn, most men are quite satisfied with that. They do not find in themselves a strong, definite, and unappeasable tendency to make further acquisitions, which would be the case, if the desire of knowledge were instinctive.—Similar objections may be made to the admission of the desire of power, as an instinctive principle. The passion is strong ; it makes its appearance at a very early period ; and if there be ground for considering it a natural passion, it is not, from that circumstance merely, to be considered an instinct. It ought to be considered also, that this feeling, however early it may exist hid and nestling in the heart, is brought forward and cherished by the circumstances of our condition. Man feels himself in want of various conveniences and enjoyments ; he imagines, if he had power, he could procure them ; but without it, he is unable to. He seeks power, therefore, in various ways, as a means of securing what he imagines, although perhaps very erroneous highest degree of

Similar views will hold in respect to the benevolent and sympathetic feelings ; and also in regard to gratitude, fear, anger and other passions. But forming, as they appear to, a prominent and even an elementary part of the constitution of human nature, they have not that precise and inflexible adaptation to particular ends, which would entitle them to be termed instincts.

Instinct, (whatever the mode or the degree of its existence in men,) is particularly a subject of interesting inquiry in the inferior animal creation. It is not only their law, but their protection, without which they could not exist. In examining the intellectual economy of the human species, we find other principles of action, and such, as from their nature and important results, more strongly arrest our attention, than that part of the human constitution, which has claims to be called instinctive.

§. 388. Marks of difference between instinct and reason.

There are some characteristic differences between instinct and reason, worthy to be noticed.—(1) Of these one is, that instinct requires no previous instruction.

While reason expands and gathers strength by slow degrees, advancing in childhood, and still advancing in mature age, instinct may be said to be always full-grown, always perfect. Accordingly it has been observed, that a bird, which has always been confined in a cage, will build, when suitable materials are furnished it, a nest precisely similar to those of its own kind in the woods. It places with the greatest ingenuity the sticks, leaves, and clay of its frail dwelling, without going through a long process of previous training, and without incurring a debt to others for their assistance.

(2) Another ground of difference is, that instinct is more accurate in its results, than reason.—We have reference here to the adaptation of means to an end ; and, consequently, the observation will apply only to those cases, where both instinct and reason are employed in performing the same or similar things. A man may build his house too high or too low ; he may lay the foundation well

or ill; but in general there is no mistake in the construction of a bird's nest, or of the cells of a bee. Reason, in the adaptation of means to an end, is liable to a thousand errors; but in instinct there is a sort of infallibility. The construction of a honey-comb indicates the greatest accuracy; the cells are all regular hexagons; a form, which permits them all to be equal and similar, without any useless interstices; and for skill and precision throughout, it almost defies imitation. But this is the work of instinct.

Again, *INSTINCT* is limited, reason is always progressive.—However successful instinct may be in conducting its possessor to a particular end, its power is evidently limited to that particular purpose. It is an impulse, implanted by the Creator, which carries forward the agent promptly and unerringly to one end, and one only. It can operate, it can be felt no further. But reason, although more liable to err, has a wider range; it is applicable to a far greater variety of purposes; and hardly having an existence at first, it ultimately embraces the universe.

#### §. 389. Of intellectual power in animals.

*INSTINCT* is found frequently in brutes, seldom in men; it operates very extensively among the former, in a very limited degree in the latter. So that when we consider the origin of this principle, as being directly from the Supreme Being, we can almost subscribe to the maxim, *DEUS EST BRUTORUM ANIMA*.—In connection with the subject of instinct in the inferiour animals, it is natural to take this opportunity to say something of the indications, which they give, of intellectual power. While they are highly furnished with instincts, they are not without some things, analogous to traits of intellect in the human race. Helvetius thought, that the superiority of intellect in man is to be ascribed solely to difference in corporeal organization, and to the influence of some adventitious circumstances in his outward condition.\* No doubt, there are advantages, in the conformation of the human system, for the exercise of intellectual power; but the question is not so

\*See the work entitled *DE L'ESPRIT*, Discours I. Note (a.)



much what brutes might be with another, as what they actually are, with their present form.

(1) Animals possess the power of association. This is implied in their possessing memory, as association is a principal element in that complex mental state. Their associations, however, are chiefly those of contiguity in time and place; but they are tenacious, and not easily altered. It is chiefly by availing themselves of this circumstance, that men are able to acquire and retain their dominion over them.

(2) The inferiour animals, as already intimated, have memory; and it would seem from some facts, that some of them have possessed this power in a remarkable degree. This is seen in the readiness, with which they retrace objects in an inverted order, as when a dog or horse returns by a road, over which he has passed only once, and at a considerable time distant.

(3) Animals are thought by many to have the power of reasoning in a small degree.—Dogs and bears are taught to dance and tumble by rewards for their obedience, and by chastisements for the contrary. They are supposed in such cases to reason in this way. "If I obey, I shall be caressed and fed; if I do not, I shall be beaten; it is, therefore, better to obey;" a regular syllogism. But all this, some will say, can be otherwise accounted for; viz, Obedience is associated with an idea of pleasure, and refusal to obey with an idea of pain. When this association is strong, the animal may be led to do what is imposed upon him without any logical deduction. But then it should be remembered, that association holds a very conspicuous place in reasoning. Mr. Locke thought, that brutes can reason, but in so doing are limited to particular ideas, not having the power of forming general or abstract ideas.

Further, animals have many or all of the passions, which are common among men, as anger, pride, revenge, gratitude. Some of them are capable of an attachment

man will sooner cast off and injure his friend

than a kind master. But there is no de

, that they are influenced by moral impressions, or they can discern between good and evil in conduct.

§. 390. Actions from instinct not moral actions.

men were guided in all their actions by instinct, they be no longer moral, but necessary agents. They be urged forward with such directness and force, while they infallibly obeyed, they could claim no for obedience. This is true, if we do not admit ambition, avarice, benevolence, and the like, to be ctive; and there are very few, who will not deny the character of instincts in the sense, in which we ly apply that term to animals.

order that man may be accountable, it seems to be sary, that good and evil, that right and wrong should t before him, with a liberty of choosing between

When this is the case, there are motives influen- him to pursue one course, and opposite considera- operating upon him to pursue another; and his mor- titude, his merit or demerit will be known by the e, which he makes under such circumstances. But re instincts there is no balancing of motives in this and, consequently, no accountability, and no praise lame.

## CHAPTER THIRTY FOURTH.

### THE WILL.

§. 301. Of what is meant by the will or the power of the will.

**T**HE human mind, amid its intricate and multiplied varieties of action, ever remains the same and indivisible. Varieties of action do not necessarily imply a want of unity in the principle, from which they originate ; the intellectual principle, therefore, is but one, although wonderfully multiplied in its modes of application. Finding the mind, acting in various ways and producing various results, it is in reference to these diversities of action and of results, that we are led to speak of its powers or susceptibilities. Among these powers is the WILL.

Hence the will may be defined the mental power or susceptibility of exercising choice ; a susceptibility, which we are necessarily led to ascribe to man or rather the mind of man, seeing him, as we constantly do, pursuing one course and avoiding another, acting on one plan and rejecting another, accepting and refusing, befriending and opposing.

§. 302. Of volition and its objects.

In remarking on the subject of the Will, we have frequent occasion to speak of VOLITION ; a term, which is not used to express the susceptibility itself, but the putting forth or exercise of it. Hence volition may be described, as the determination of the mind to do or not do, or it may be expressed more briefly by saying, the ~~min~~ination or act of choice.—It would,

Now, that, in every act of the will, there must be at least two objects, in reference to which the exercise of it is put forth. These objects, (whatever we may suppose them to be,) are the subjects of the mind's contemplation; and it refers to one the preference over the others. This, which will be found agreeable to each one's internal experience, seems to be fully involved in the common use of the terms, involving relation to this subject; VOLITION according to prevailing use always implying choice or choosing. Now there must evidently be an object of this choice, which the term, as it is ordinarily used, is employed to express. To will without willing something, or, what is the same thing, choose without choosing something, would be much the same as to remember without any object; that is, without any thing being remembered. Therefore every act of the will, (that is, every volition,) has an object. But certainly it is not agreeable to common usage to speak of choosing choice, when there is only one object before us, and even of course we could accept of no other; however glad we should do it, if opportunity were given.

§. 393. Of the difference between willing and desiring.

In view of what has been said, it is obvious, that to will, to exercise volition is essentially the same in its nature to desire; the latter mode of expression, as well as the former, implying a comparison, a preference, a choice. We may safely assert, it is the common sense of mankind, that no person desires an object, and at the same time has preference or choice in respect to it, although it may always be very obvious with what other objects it is compared. But admitting, that the feeling, expressed by desire, and that, expressed by volition, are in their nature the same; still there is a difference in the circumstances, under which they exist. That is; The common usage of our language calls the same feeling, when existing under certain circumstances, DESIRE, to which it gives the name VOLITION, when existing under other circumstances. The distinction between the two is merely an incidental one, having its foundation rather in the necessities

and forms of speech, than in the constitution and exercises of the mind. Accordingly the difference between the two seems to be this ; When the desirable thing is so placed within our reach and under such circumstances as to render our preference operative, we use the verb **TO WILL** ; but when this is not the case, whether owing to the nature of the object itself or to the counteracting influence of other objects, we commonly use the verb **TO DESIRE**.

Hence it comports with the use of the language to say, we will to walk, but we desire to fly ; we will to build a house, but we desire to create a world ; we will to sail from Calais to London, but we desire to sail from Calais to the peak of Chimborazo, or to the mountains in the moon.

Agreeably to these views, the volition and the desire can never be *directly* opposed to each other ; although they may be virtually co-existent, and, therefore, may be *relatively* opposed. A great number of attainable objects, which are successively, or perhaps simultaneously, contemplated by the mind, may all appear desirable ; but volition can exist only in respect to one of them. There can be only one desire under these circumstances, which can be regarded as the greatest, strongest, or efficient desire ; and this, the use of the language authorizes us to designate, as the volition.

When, therefore, it is said, that a man has a desire to build a house, but wills, or has a volition not to, it is to be explained in this way. There is in this case a co-existence, either actually or virtually, of desires or preferences. These desires, possessing relative degrees of strength, undoubtedly counteract or oppose each other ; but it is a relative, and not a direct opposition. Unquestionably the building of the house is a desirable object ; but the money, which is to be drawn out of his coffers to do it, is an object still dearer. He desires the one, but has still stronger desires for the other. Now as we call the prevailing desire, in respect to things within our reach, volition ; it may be truly said, he desires a house, but wills not to have one ; that is, in the conflict of desires, stronger than another.

## §. 394. Nature and kinds of motives.

As volition is found to exist only in certain circumstances, it may, therefore, be considered an effect, and, consequently, must have a cause, which gives rise to it; using the term, cause, in the sense heretofore explained, i. e. as implying merely a regular and constant antecedence. The causes of volition are motives; so that a motive may be defined to be any thing, which moves or excites the mind in putting forth volition. Without motives, that is, without some ground or reason of our choice, volition would never be exercised, and, consequently, there would never be voluntary action, since a voluntary action implies, and is preceded by volition.

Motives, in reference to their tendency to cause volition are spoken of, as either weak or strong. That motive, which has a less degree of previous tendency to move the will, or, what is the same thing, appears the less inviting, when it is presented to the view of the mind, is called the weaker motive. On the contrary, that motive, which appears to the mind the most inviting, and, therefore, has the greater tendency to move the will, is the stronger motive.

The strength of a motive is found to vary in two ways from two causes. (1)—It will be found to vary, first, not only with the particular object, which is before the mind, but also with changes in its attendant circumstances. Many things, which once appeared eminently desirable, and strongly influenced our volitions, appear less desirable, and have less power over us, in consequence of being accidentally associated with other things. In other instances, the effect is directly the reverse, and the motive becomes stronger from the same cause.—(2) Things, that are placed before the view of the mind, have their tendency to move the will increased or diminished according to the nature and circumstances of the mind, which views them. The mind does not always continue the same, any more than the shifting scenes of the material world around it. It is continually calling into exercise susceptibilities which had hitherto lain dormant; giving them new

of strength or novelties of combination. Consequently the same thing will appear differently to different individuals, and also to the same individual at different times.

§. 395. Motives considered in reference to their origin.

MOTIVES, in reference to their origin, may be divided into two classes, INTERNAL, and EXTERNAL.—By the INTERNAL, we mean those, which are connected with our physical organization, such as hunger, thirst, and bodily pains and enjoyments; and also our passions or affections, whether good or evil. Accordingly in all languages, people speak of being impelled, of being moved, or excited to action in these ways.—By the EXTERNAL, we mean such as can be traced to external causes, and exist in something without us. All external objects, which please or disgust us, operate upon us as motives. It is true, they influence the will through the medium of the emotions and passions; but as the influence exercised may be traced to them, as the ultimate subjects of it, they may properly be termed the motive. As all external objects, which are not utterly indifferent, affect the will more or less, it is useless to attempt an enumeration of the motives from this source. In what way it happens, that certain appetites and passions, or that certain external objects, which appear to us pleasing and desirable, affect the will, and cause volition, cannot be explained. Nor can we give an explanation of any other instance of cause and effect; but of the truth of the fact, that the will is influenced by means of them, there is no room to doubt.

§. 396. Of the general nature of human liberty.

Volitions are always determined by the strongest motives. In other words, the WILL always is, as the greatest apparent good, or as what appears most agreeable. To say otherwise would imply the direct contradiction, that the mind chooses, what it does not choose, and likes what it dislikes. Our voluntary actions correspond to our volitions; that is, the action will be as the volition is; and men under the circumstances stated, having their volitions

in perfect correspondence with the motive, and the action agreeing with the volition, are justly said to act freely, or with liberty. But moral liberty, we apprehend, is not rightly considered a quality or property of man, analogous to his other mental and physical qualities, but a privilege.

If this be a correct notion, **LIBERTY**, in its full extent, is the privilege of acting according to our wishes, without being subject to any restraint. This definition coincides very nearly with the concise explanation of it by the unlearned, who commonly say, that liberty consists in choosing and doing, as one pleases. It will, indeed, be said, that there is an indissoluble relation between the volition and the motive. This is true. But the circumstance, that nothing can have the character of a motive independently of our feelings, and that the efficient or strongest motive is never at variance with them, takes away from this fixed and inflexible relation the attribute of constraint.

§ 397. Human liberty of two kinds. Liberty of the will.

Liberty, then, may be predicated of man in two respects, viz., liberty of **WILL**, and liberty of **EXTERNAL ACTION**.

As to the will, it may be said, that it always has liberty, is always free, using the terms in accordance with the above definition. When a person, looking upon a number of objects, makes choice of one in preference to another, he does it agreeably to his wish or inclination, and has the highest possible liberty; we can conceive of no greater. As, therefore, there is an inseparable connection between the volition, and the preference or the strongest inclination of the heart, (the latter always being implied in the former,) it is safe to assert, that there is no constraint on the volition, and that the will is always free. In support of the fact, that the volition, whatever its relation to the motive, is in the same direction with the preponderance of inclination, an appeal may be made to the common experience of men; and it can hardly be doubted, that on examination every one will find it confirmed by what takes place in himself. If they do not find this



to be the case, they will find, that the will is not always conformed to the strongest motive, which will lead to plain contradictions, if the terms are used in the sense here attached to them.

§. 398. Of the liberty which is external.

There is also liberty of external actions.—But while we say, that there is liberty in this respect, it cannot be denied, that it is subject to contingencies, which do not exist in relation to the freedom of volitions. In other words, the freedom of external actions is sometimes from various causes interrupted. For instance, a person has a desire to go to a certain place ; he exercises volition or wills to go to that place ; and the means, by which his determination is to be effected, is the motion of his feet. If there be nothing to prevent this motion, then his actions are free, as well as his will ; but if he be bound or shackled, then there is a constraint, a deprivation of freedom in respect to the action. And it is the same in all analogous cases. There may be a freedom in the volition, while there is a constraint and hinderance in the performance ; so that necessity can be predicated of external actions, but no necessity analogous to that, which is predicated of actions, can be predicated of the mental resolve. But in all outward actions, where necessity truly exists, men are not accountable. The responsibility rests with that extraneous force, whatever its origin, which makes the action contrary to the intention. The action does not properly belong

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NOTE. The view of liberty above given seems to coincide essentially with that of M. Destutt-Tracy. He has the following remarks ;—“ Je dis que l' idée de *liberté* nait de faculté de vouloir ; car, avec Locke, j'entends par *liberté* la puissance d'executer sa volonté, d'agir conformément a son desir ; et je soutiens qu'il est impossible d'attacher une idée nette a ce mot, quand on veut lui donner un autre sens.” (Elemens d'Ideologie, part 4, et 5, p. 99, 2d. ed.)

the subject of it ; but to that power, which forced the object to act contrary to his own wishes.

§. 399. Of the liberty of the Supreme Being.

We are so constituted, that we will or exercise choice, in reference to the last result of an examination of the objects or objects, which are placed before us. Such results, (that is, the final views the mind has of whatever contemplates,) are the foundation of the preference, which we have seen to be involved in every act of volition. or can we suppose this to be otherwise than it should be. It is the great excellency of our nature, and the confirmation of our freedom, that the mind does not remain unmoved under such circumstances ; and that it is not without a preference, when it has clearly before itself a view of the highest good or evil.

Our condition in this respect seems to be essentially the same with that of the Supreme Being himself. It is evident, that there is no being more free and perfect than God ; and yet he is inevitably governed in all his doings by what, in the great range of events, is wisest and best. His fixed and invariable principles of action are wisdom and goodness ; and whatever he does, is in accordance with them. So that it may be said, that the Deity himself has his laws ; and surely the weak mind of man cannot presume to be more free and unrestrained, than that of the God, who made it.—Any other liberty than this cannot well be supposed to exist. “If (says Mr. Locke) break loose from the conduct of reason, and to want that restraint of examination and judgment, that keeps us from doing and choosing the worse, be liberty, madmen and fools are the only free men. Yet I think nobody would choose to be mad, for the sake of such liberty, but he that is mad already.”

§. 400. Evidence from observation of the connection between motives and volitions.

There is proof from observation that our volitions are influenced by motives, or that they will be agreeably

to what we consider the highest good. That is, in our intercourse with men, we cannot help observing, that they act precisely, as they would do, if this were the case ; and, therefore, we conclude it to be so. So evident is it from what we observe around us, that the will, as well as the imagination, and memory, and other mental powers, has its laws, as to have elicited the remark, that a certain regular order may be traced in the conduct of men, analogous to the regular course, which we observe in the physical world. It can be pronounced, that men will act in a particular way in given circumstances with hardly less confidence, than that trees will grow in a given situation. So that there is a general course of nature applicable to the mind of man, as well as to external material things ; and not less applicable to the moral, than the intellectual part of his spiritual constitution. But if we take away the influence of motives, if we say that men are not governed by what appears to them the highest good ; then this regularity is marred, the moral order and beauty of nature are broken up, and it will be impossible to form any opinion of the probable course of men, although we may be well acquainted with the minutest circumstances of their situation.

§. 401. Of encouragements to the making of moral efforts.

The fact, that men are influenced and directed by the motives set before them, is an encouragement in the making of moral efforts, and in the use of such means, as are adapted to reclaim the vicious, or to strengthen habits of virtue. When men go astray, what can we do more in our attempts at reclaiming them, than apply promises, threatenings, and exhortations ? We address these to them as *motives*, expecting that they will be received, and have their influence as such. These are the means, which we employ, and we find that they meet with success. But liberate the will from all particular tendencies and law ; show that we are utterly unable to predict the nature of its acts under all circumstances whatever, and then there is no encouragement to apply means for the attainment of moral

ends ; there is no encouragement to moral efforts of any kind. When this is the case, we can never tell what is suitable to be addressed to men, in order to induce them to change their course of conduct.

§. 402. Of motives considered as modifications of our feelings.

The doctrine we propose is, that there is a correspondence between the volition and the motive ; and yet the will is free. They sustain a fixed and inflexible relation ; and at the same time the intellect experiences no constraint. And this freedom, which is such a source of just complacency and of happiness to man, is consistent not only with the superintending providence of God, but is even analogous to the freedom of his own divine character. But how can this be ? In what way can it be shown, that freedom can be consistent with such a fixed and unvarying relation as is stated to exist ? The answer is, that the volition, although it sustains the relation of an effect to the motive which is its cause, always implies, as has been stated, a preference, a choice, the fulfilment of its own pleasure.

But then again we are asked, How does it happen, that the motive is never at variance with the internal inclination or choice ? This inquiry leads us to consider more particularly the nature of motives.

It is very obvious, that the qualities, which render motives operative and effective are as various as the exercises of the intellect itself. Although they may be supposed more often than otherwise to hold up to the mind something agreeable, yet they are sometimes invested with qualities of disgust or of dread. The origin of these qualities, of whatever kind they may be, we attribute to the mind. This is their source.—In respect to that class of motives, which was termed Internal, there is no room to doubt of the correctness of this view. Hunger and thirst, and other appetites ; benevolence and sympathy and revenge, and other emotions and passions operate upon us and direct the will. By means of the will, they move and control our actions. But evidently this does not h — consequence of any thing extraneous to ourselves if our con-

stitution. The motive, which orders the will, and which leads to action, is within ; it is in those feelings of hunger and of sympathy, &c., which have been mentioned. As to motives of this kind, therefore, if there be any constraint, it must be in our own breasts, in ourselves, in the natural impulses of our own intellectual economy. But it is evident, that such constraint as this cannot be at variance with any rational idea of the highest liberty.

§. 403. Further remarks on the same subject.

But motives, as we have had occasion to see, are of two kinds, Internal and External. If then we look again at EXTERNAL motives, we shall be led to the same result. Motives of this kind are such as can be traced to external causes, and exist in something without us. All objects without us may, under different circumstances and indifferent degrees, exist as motives.

Our first remark is, it is impossible for us to regard any object or action external to us, as having a character, except it be in reference to those feelings, which are excited in our own minds by noticing such object or action. That is, if they excited in us no feeling, they would not appear to us to possess either beauty or ugliness, whether of a natural or moral kind. This opinion has been stated and illustrated in part, in the chapters on Beauty and Sublimity ; and must be plain to all. Abstracted, therefore, from all those internal emotions and passions, of which they are the cause, all objects and actions without are equally good and bad, equally beautiful and ugly, equally sublime and ludicrous, equally indifferent. It is our own feelings, therefore, reflected back upon all external objects of whatever kind, which infuse into them their qualities of unworthiness or of excellence. This character of excellence or of the opposite, these pleasing or displeasing attributes in their turn operate upon the mind.

§. 404. Instances of the acquired or associated character of external motives.

It would be no difficult task to adduce instances, illustrating and confirming the above views. As an ex-

ample, a war is announced in Europe, and the merchant winds up his accounts, and detains his vessels at home. The war is his motive for so doing. Subsequently there is a false report of war in Europe, which he believes to be true, and he pursues the same course as before. In both these cases the internal feeling or belief, combined with his fears, gives to the motive, as the war would be considered, its whole effect. In the latter case, it constitutes it entirely as the reported war is only a fiction.

Again, RICHES, whether in the form of lands or of gold and silver, or in any other form, constitute a powerful motive. But it is in vain to presume, that the common dust on which we tread, or even the brightest masses of ore it contains, inherit and possess in themselves a power to keep men constantly in action, to carry them from land to land, and from sea to sea. It is the mind itself, which invests them with attributes, that render them so effective. Men see in them the means of the enjoyments they covet ; the means of influence among their fellows ; the source of honour and power. So that if riches are one of the most efficient motives, that can be presented to the human heart, it is the heart, the soul, which makes them so. Since you have only to place the man, who desired them so much, on his death-bed ; you have only to show him, that his gilded heaps can no longer purchase honour, influence, enjoyment, not even an hour of life, not even exemption from a single pain, and then riches are no longer a motive ; he turns from them with disgust ; he regards them as little as the chaff, which the wind scatters away.

All motives, therefore, are, either directly or indirectly, our own feelings ; at least nothing can have the character of a motive or be called such, independently of the feelings. And, hence, to assert, that the soul is governed by motives, is much the same as to say, that it is governed by itself. It is like the citizens of a free republic ; it is not without law, but it obeys no enactments, but such as are agreeable to its own choice.

§. 405. Connection between liberty and moral agency or accountability.

The subject of this chapter, involving as it does that of liberty, is one of no small interest. The interest taken in it has no doubt been much enhanced from the circumstance of its having been supposed by many, that the freedom of the will constitutes man a moral or accountable agent. Undoubtedly freedom of the will is requisite to moral agency; there is no accountability, no merit or demerit without it. But the powers of association, of memory, of belief, and of reasoning are equally necessary. And yet neither these susceptibilities, nor that condition or privilege of mental action, called freedom, constitute moral agency of themselves, however indispensable they may be to its existence. The brute creation possess the powers of association and of memory, and probably the reasoning power; and as to liberty, they obviously have as much of it as man has. They lie down and rise up; they go to this place or to that, choosing their abode on the rock or in the desert, as it suits them; they like and dislike; they are continually in action; but they are not naturally subject to a greater degree of constraint either internal or external, than the human species. But brutes are not supposed to be moral or accountable.

NOTE. No subject in Mental Philosophy has been more frequently and more ably discussed than that of the Will. See, among other writers and treatises of greater or less value, Des Cartes, *PRINCIPIA*, Pt. I, §. §. 39, 40, 41; Hobbe's Letter about Liberty and Necessity with Observations on the same by a Prelate of the Church of England. Chubb's Reflections on Natural Liberty; Papers of Clarke and Leibnitz, V. §. §. 8, 9, 15, &c.; Clarke's Discourse concerning the Being and Attributes of God, PROP. X; Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion, (Lond. Ed. 1758, anonymous;) Archb. King's Essay on the Origin of Evil, CH. V; Edwards on the Will; Priestley's Philosophical Necessity; Locke's Essay, CHAP. on Power.

## CHAPTER THIRTY FIFTH.

### MORAL SUSCEPTIBILITY OR CONSCIENCE.

§. 406. Of the accountableness or moral nature of man.

**M**AN is accountable to his Creator ; for accountableness implies a superiour, and evidently the highest aims to superintendence and government exist in the Supreme Being. When he does right, he is approved ; when he does wrong, he is condemned. To say that he is a moral being, is in effect the same as to say, that he is accountable, or that he is capable of doing right or wrong. It is in this respect he differs, (and the degree of difference is great in itself and incalculable in its results,) from the brutes of life around him, from the beast of the field and from the bird of heaven. His accountableness gives him a new character ; it imparts to his natural existence, which he has in common with the brutes, a superadded and nobler existence, which he has in common with angels.

It is necessarily involved and implied in the moral character of man, that some things are right and others wrong, that some are good and others evil. Moral good and evil are also expressed by the terms, merit and demerit, virtue and vice.—It is proposed in this chapter to make some inquiries into the ground or foundation of these distinctions.

§. 407. Virtue and vice, merit and demerit in agents, not in actions.

And in order to clear the way to this inquiry, it is to be noticed, in the first place, that actions, in them-



sidered, have no character ; whatever may be the common mode of speaking in respect to them.—It is true, that we speak of actions, as good or bad, as virtuous or vicious as worthy of praise or of censure. But if we analyze our feelings, if we accurately consider what it is, to which we apply these epithets, we shall come to the conclusion, that by actions, as the subjects of moral merit or demerit, is meant the *agent acting*. The action is nothing, except in far as it is significant of certain mental qualities ; and therefore, virtue considered as distinct from the virtuous person, and vice, as distinct from the vicious person, have no existence. There is no virtue or vice, merit or demerit, *a parte rei* or independently of the agent, any more than there is a beauty or sublimity of that character.

§. 408. True import of the terms, virtue and vice, merit and demerit.

And yet it remains to be stated, in what way such terms may be employed consistently with truth, and without causing misconception.—Observe then, that certain actions, that is, certain agents in acting, excite in us emotions of approval, and others, on the contrary, cause emotions of disapprobation. Certain actions, therefore, are made, from our very constitution, to sustain a particular relation to certain emotions or intellectual states. The relation, which exists between actions and emotions of disapproval, is expressed by the terms, *demerit*, and *vice* ; the relation, which exists between other actions and emotions of approval, is expressed by the terms, *merit*, and *virtue*.

Virtue and vice, merit and demerit, therefore, inasmuch as they are the mere relations existing between the thing approved and the approving mind, are evidently nothing self-existing, like the UNIVERSAL ESSENCES of the Schoolmen, or those ETERNAL IDEAS, which have a place in the doctrines of Plato. At most they can only be considered a felt relation ; and, therefore, can never exist abstracted from and independently of the agent. But while we are willing to allow them an existence only as relations, we are ready to concede, that in this sense there is a person

nent and immutable distinction between them. That is, whatever actions are generally approved by men can never be otherwise than approved by them, while their mental constitution remains the same, as at present. On the other hand, whatever actions are generally disapproved, can never be otherwise, while the same constitution remains. Vice can never become virtue; virtue can never become vice.

And this interesting truth will appear the more impressive, when we consider, that the permanency and immutability of the distinction between virtue and vice have their origin in the Supreme Being himself. It is He, that has ordained, that certain actions shall cause certain emotions, that some things shall be approved and others not; it is He, that has instituted the relation, which exists between the deed, which is performed, and the feeling, which responds to it. As he was governed by the highest wisdom in so doing, we may well conclude, that there is a permanency in moral distinctions no less lasting, than the divine nature.

§. 409. Of the existence of a moral susceptibility or conscience.

It will be seen, that it has virtually been taken for granted in the preceding section, that there is in man a moral susceptibility or conscience. If there be original feelings of approval or disapproval, as was asserted, there must of course be something in the internal constitution, corresponding to such results. There must be something in the mind, from which they proceed.—The effect of this susceptibility in reference to ourselves is, we are conscious, according as we act one way or another, of an internal sanctioning or condemnation, approval or disapproval. Its effects, when we are not in action ourselves, but are noticing the conduct of others, is the same; at some times we approve, at others condemn. Whereas if we were destitute of this susceptibility, (otherwise called conscience,) this very conduct, and these very agents, which have now a moral character so decided, would be utterly indifferent. This susceptibility, then, in

one sense the great source of moral distinctions, of right and wrong, of merit and demerit, of virtue and vice. That is to say, if we were destitute of the susceptibility, it would be utterly beyond our power to ascertain these important distinctions. Our conscience is the means or instrument, which God has given us to know good from evil, the right and the wrong; although, as God is the author of our conscience, in Him alone resides the ultimate source or authorship of the moral principles of the universe.

God is the ultimate source, and conscience, together with whatever may be considered as its aids or assistances, is the subordinate or secondary source of the laws, by which men are to be controlled. Hence if conscience indicate the will of God in respect to agents and actions, and thus separate what the Divine Mind has pronounced good and evil, it lays the foundation of MORAL OBLIGATION; it being implied in moral obligation, that we are bound to pursue one course rather than another, to perform that, which is right, and avoid that, which is wrong.

§. 410. Of the various opinions respecting the ground of moral obligation.

It is not to be concealed, that there has been a want of uniformity on this whole subject. Different writers have explained in different ways both the ultimate source and the developement of moral distinctions. Hence they have necessarily been divided as to the ground of moral obligation. One ascribes it to the moral fitness of things; another finds it in the decisions of reason; another in expediency, and in the promotion of the public good; another in Revelation. But after hearing these and other solutions of the ground of moral obligation, the question still returns, Why does a regard for the public good, or a belief in Revelation, or the conclusions of reason render it right for me to do a particular action, and wrong not to? When such a question is put to us, we find ourselves driven back upon the feelings of our own hearts. Our Creator, in forming us with a susceptibility of emotions of approval or disapproval, has furnished us with a guide

the discharge of our duties to Him, to our fellow beings, to ourselves. Without this susceptibility, this inward feeling, this CONSCIENCE, men would experience no regret and compunction even in disobeying the express commands of God himself. Without the susceptibility of moral emotions, it would be all the same, whether they regarded or disregarded the most affecting calls of charity and of the public good. Without this, benevolent intercourse would cease; religious homage would be at an end; the bonds of society would be loosed and dissolved. The true source, then, of moral obligation is in the natural impulses of the human breast; in a man's own conscience. It is in this, that we find the origin of the multitude of moral motives, that are continually stirring up men to worthy and exalted enterprises. This is the law, which governs them; and as it is inseparable from that nature, of which the Supreme Being is the author, it is the law of God.

§. 411. Want of uniformity in our moral judgments.

But here some difficulties are to be considered. It has often been objected to the doctrine, which attributes our moral judgments and moral obligation to an original susceptibility, that there is too great a want of uniformity in the results of such alleged susceptibility. Dr. Paley seems to have thought, that there is great weight in this objection. His views are given in connection with the following narration, which he has translated from Valerius Maximus.\*—The father of Caius Toranius had been proscribed by the Triumvirate. Caius Toranius, coming over to the interests of that party, discovered to the officers the place, where he concealed himself, and gave them withal a description, by which they might distinguish his person, when they found him. The old man, more anxious for the fortunes and safety of his son, than about the little, that might remain of his own life, began immediately to inquire of the officers, who seized him, Whether his son was well? Whether he had done his duty to the satisfaction of his

\* Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy, Bk. I, ch. v.

generals? That son, replied one of the officers, so dear to thy affections, betrayed thee to us ; by his information thou art apprehended and diest. The officer with this struck a poniard to his heart, and the unhappy parent fell, not so much affected by his own fate, as by the means to which he owed it.

The advocates of an original susceptibility of moral emotions maintain, that if this story were related to the most ignorant and degraded Savage, to one, who had been cut off from infancy from intercourse with his fellowmen, he would at once exhibit disapprobation of the conduct of Toranius, and pity and respect for his father. Dr. Paley, inasmuch as he discountenanced the notion of a natural conscience, and of original judgments of virtue and vice, has given, at some length, the arguments of those, who deny this result. Following the suggestions of our own feelings, we cannot help thinking with those, who hold, that the Savage would have sentiments favourable to the father, and against the son ; provided that the Savage were made acquainted with the relation between them, with the nature and degree of the acts of kindness, which are always implied in the history of those, who sustain the parental relation. Unless he were made to understand this, his decision, whatever it might be, would be irrelevant to the present inquiry.

§. 412. Of the objection to conscience drawn from the conduct of the Spartans and of Savages.

Dr. Paley and those, who think with him, remind us, that theft, which is punished by most laws, was not unfrequently rewarded by the laws of Sparta. We are reminded also of the cruelty exercised by Savages upon their prisoners taken in war, and of the appalling fact, that in some countries aged and infirm parents have been cast out by their children, and exposed to a sure and lingering death. Now, in reference to these facts, we readily admit, that, in consequence of some accidental circumstances, moral distinctions have sometimes been neglected or overruled in civilized communities. Nor can it be denied, that

some Savage tribes, debased by want and ignorance, have given instances of injustice and cruelty of the most shocking nature. But we cannot readily see, how these few exceptions disprove the general rule ; although they are undoubtedly exceptions to it. The general statement, that men are originally susceptible of moral emotions, is confirmed by the experience, and testimony, and conduct of millions and millions of mankind. The great mass of the human race, amid all the differences of climate and government, and local institutions and observances, pronounce, with the most evident uniformity, on the excellence of some actions, and on the iniquity of others. Reasoning, therefore, in this case, as we do in others, we cannot admit the discordant voice of some depraved individual, or the accidental moral obliquities, which have at times pervaded some civilized communities, or the testimony of the savage and ignorant inhabitants of a remote island, as disproving what is evidently the unanimous declaration of all the world besides. They prove, that the original susceptibility of moral emotions may be weakened and perverted, but that is all. They show, that conscience may be misguided by accidental circumstances, or that its influence may be blunted and annulled, but they are vainly brought to show, that conscience has no existence.

§. 413. Conscience sometimes perverted by passion.

Admitting the fact, that the moral susceptibility may sometimes be blunted and perverted, something more seems to be necessary, viz., That we should briefly state under what circumstances, or from what causes, this takes place.—And, in the first place, the due exercise of this susceptibility, or what is otherwise termed CONSCIENCE, may be perverted, when a person is under the influence of violent passions.—The moral emotion, which under other circumstances would have arisen, has failed to arise in the present instance, because the soul is intensely and wholly taken up with another species of feeling. But after the present passion has subsided, the power of moral judgments returns ; the person, who has been the subject of

such violence of feeling, looks with horror on the deeds, which he has committed. So that the original susceptibility, which has been contended for, cannot justly be said to cease to exist in this instance ; although its due exercise is prevented by the accidental circumstance of inordinate passion.

Further ; those, who imagine, that there are no permanent moral distinctions, because they are not regarded in moments of extreme passion, would do well to consider, that at such times persons are unable rightly to apprehend any truths whatever. A murderer, when drawing the blade from the bosom of his victim, probably could not tell the quotient of sixteen divided by four, or any other simple results in numbers ; but certainly his inability to perceive them under such circumstances does not annul numerical powers and distinctions. Why then should the same inability take away moral distinctions ?

§. 414. Complexity in actions a source of confusion in our moral judgments.

A second reason, why men, although they are under the guidance of an original susceptibility, do not always form the same judgments of actions, is to be found in their complexity.—We have already seen, that actions are nothing of themselves, independently of the agent. In forming moral judgments, therefore, we are to look at the agent ; and we are to regard him, not only as willing and bringing to pass certain effects, but we are to consider him also as the subject of certain desires and intentions ; and we are unable rightly to estimate these, without taking into view various attendant circumstances. In some cases the intention is obvious ; and in these the judgment is readily formed. But in other cases, the results are complex ; they are a mixture of good and evil ; and hence arises a difficulty in ascertaining the true intention and design of the agent. When different individuals are called upon to judge of an instance of this kind, they will be not unlikely to give their attention to different circumstances, or they may have different views of the same circumstances, co

as indications of feeling and intention. This being the case, the judgments, which they will pass, will in effect be pronounced upon different things, inasmuch as they are of such difference of views. Hence in a multitude of cases, there will be sufficient reason for a diversity of moral sentiments, where by superficial observers a perfect uniformity may have been expected.—These remarks throw some light upon the supposed approbation of theft among the Spartans. This people were trained up by political institutions to regard property as of little value, as their lands were equally divided ; they ate at public tables, and the great end of all their civil regulations was to render the citizens athletic, active, patient, and brave. Nothing else was considered subordinate. The permission, which was given to the Spartan lads to steal, was of the nature of the public regulations. It was a sort of tax, which the citizens voluntarily imposed upon themselves, in order to encourage vigilance, endurance, and address in every part of the community ; and hence, when they were detected immediately after the theft, they were severely punished for deficiency of skill. Accordingly the theft, which was permitted and approved by the Spartans, is a very different thing from what goes under that name in other countries. The mere act may have been the same, but there was no correspondence in the results and attendant circumstances, and in the degree of evil intention.—Similar considerations in other instances will go far in explaining apparent deviations from the permanent distinctions between vice and virtue, and will reduce the number of cases in which a supposed want of uniformity in moral sentiments.

#### 15. Influence of early associations on moral judgments.

Moral judgments, in the third place, are sometimes perplexed and perverted by means of early associations.—The principle of association does not operate on the moral capacity directly ; it operates indirectly, and has considerable influence. When a particular action is judged of, it calls up, in the mind of different individuals, different and distinct series of accessory circum-



stances. This difference in the tendencies of the suffering principle can hardly fail to have considerable influence in modifying the sentiment of approbation or disapprobation, resulting from the consideration of any particular action.

Accordingly when vices are committed by near friends by a brother, or a parent, they do not excite in us such horror, as in other cases. Our prepossessions in favour of the persons, who have committed the crime, suggest thousand circumstances, which seem to us to alleviate the aggravation. We frame for them a multitude of plausible excuses, which we should not have thought of if it had not been for the endearments and intercourse of previous connection.—Savage life also gives us a new illustration of the views now expressed. Owing to the peculiar situation of those in that state and the consequences of early associations, a factitious and exaggerated importance is attached to mere courage; and gentleness, meekness, and benevolence, are, as virtues, proportionately depressed.

§. 416. Illustration of the principle of the preceding section.

As the second cause of discrepancies in the decisions of conscience was illustrated by remarks on the general approval of theft among the Spartans, we may here give a similar illustration of what has just been laid down concerning the third cause of the results complained of.—In a late Expedition to the Rocky Mountains, undertaken by order of the United States, various interesting facts were ascertained concerning the Savage tribes, through which the party passed. Among other things they learnt that the Omawhaws\*, a tribe of some note, dwelling at a considerable distance from the river Missouri, are wanting in respect to their old people, and that they regard them as useless burdens to the community. When the aged go out on a hunting party, or on warlike expeditions against an enemy, they are sometimes left under a hastily erected shelter

\* Long's Expedition to the Rocky Mountains, Vol. I, chas. 24.

and are thus permitted to perish after consuming the scanty stock of provisions, with which they are furnished.

Here we see the influence of early associations. The Omawhaws are taught, even from the cradle, to attach their chief honour to *active* bravery, to feats in battle and achievements in hunting. And they transfer, (as a Savage would be likely to,) the discredit of moral and physical debility in other cases to that of old age. Encouraged by the old people themselves, they carry these views so far, that when through want of provisions some of the tribe or of the party must die, the lot inevitably falls on the aged instead of the young. But we hold, that this fact does not prove these Savages destitute of natural conscience. It does not appear, that they expose their old men to death in this way before the exhaustion of their provisions, or that they leave them without feelings of regret, or that they do it against the choice and consent of the aged sufferers themselves. Such being the circumstances, under which they are exposed, the most that can justly be said, is, that the feelings of nature, (for they love, although they do not respect and honour the aged,) are made to bow to the exigencies of their situation. It may appear, that they have a wrong or perverted conscience in permitting the sacrifice of the aged in preference to that of the young, but it by no means follows, that they have no conscience at all. Especially as they are described as being hospitable, so far as they have any thing to give; courteous and respectful in their general intercourse; affectionate in their families; and not wanting in justice in the ordinary distribution and management of what little they possess.

While we contend, therefore, for an original susceptibility of moral emotions, it must be admitted, that its decisions are sometimes perverted by the violence of momentary passions; the uniformity of its decisions is interrupted also by complexity in the action and a complication of good and evil in the results; and some partial and erroneous judgments may be attributed to the influence of association. To these causes are to be ascribed those in-

stances of striking deviation from moral rectitude, which the opposers of an original susceptibility of moral emotions are fond of bringing up. Those instances, we apprehend, do not disprove the existence of the susceptibility, but merely show, that it is sometimes liable to perversions.

§. 417. Of enlightening the conscience.

It clearly follows from the views, which have been taken, that the moral susceptibility will operate with the greater readiness and efficiency, in proportion as the knowledge of ourselves and of our relations to other beings is increased. And the knowledge to be acquired with this end may be stated in some particulars.—(1) As the Being, who gave us life, has given us conscience, and, consequently, could not intend, that conscience should act in opposition to himself, it seems to be an indispensable duty, that men should be acquainted with his character. His character is made known to us in those works, of which He is the author, and in the Scriptures. If we have right views of the Supreme Being, and of the relation, which we sustain to Him, our conscience will infallibly approve what he has enjoined, and disapprove what he has forbidden.—(2) Inasmuch as it results from the relation, which we sustain to the Supreme Being, that correct decisions of conscience are not, and cannot be at variance with his laws, but will agree with them, whenever they are made known, it follows, that all should be made acquainted with the moral and religious precepts, which he has communicated to us. To every mind, that has proper views of the self-existence of God and of our dependence upon Him, it will be enough to justify any action, that *He has said it*. The mere disclosure of his will cannot but render, in all cases, an action approved in the sight of conscience, whatever may be our ignorance of the consequences connected with it. Hence, in order to have a right conscience, it is exceedingly important, we should know not only what God is in himself, but every thing, which he has expressly commanded.

(3) As all duties, which truly result from the relations we sustain to our fellow beings, are expressions of the will of God, who is the Creator of all around us as well as of ourselves, we should earnestly inquire what those relations and duties are. We are to inquire what duties devolve upon us in respect to our immediate circle, to the poor and the sick, to our neighbourhood, and to society in general. Our feelings in respect to the performance of such duties cannot be so clear and vivid, if we exclude the Supreme Being from our consideration of them, as they would otherwise be. A knowledge of the will of God, from whatever other source it is obtained, will tend to guide and strengthen the inward moral feeling.

(4) Since the decisions of conscience are often exceedingly perverted by the undue influence of passion, men should both guard against the recurrence of passionate feelings in general; and when at any time they have reason to suspect themselves of being under the influence of such passion, the decision on the merits or demerits of any particular action ought to be put off to a more favourable period. Nor are we less to guard against prejudices,—the prejudices in favour of friends, and against those, whom we may imagine to have injured us, the prejudices of sects, political parties, &c.; for they often give the mind a wrong view of the action, upon which it is to judge. Also when actions are complex, either in themselves or their results, the greater care is requisite in properly estimating them.

§. 418. Of guilt when a person acts conscientiously.

The question has sometimes been started, Whether a person is in any case to be considered as guilty and to be punished for actions done conscientiously; for instance, when certain ignorant Savages are supposed to act conscientiously in putting their aged and infirm parents to death.—Undoubtedly, in many cases, where people act conscientiously, there is great guilt. And the reason of it is evident. We have seen, that conscience, is in some measure under our control; it may be enlightened; it may

be strengthened ; or it may be greatly weakened, and in some cases be made to approve of actions of the most unworthy and sinful kind. Men, therefore, are to have a right conscience ; this great and exalting principle is to receive and ought to receive the very first attention ; and they are accountable whenever it is neglected. Otherwise we furnish a very easy and convenient excuse to the iniquitous perpetrators of all the cruelties of the Inquisition, of all the persecutions of the Protestants, of all the acts of unkindness and tyranny, which have ever been exercised upon individuals and communities.

And the position, that men are accountable and guilty for having a wrong conscience in proportion to their means of knowledge, holds good in respect to the most ignorant and degraded Savage tribes, as well as in respect to civilized nations. It is true, no individual ought to assume the province of judging, what that degree of guilt is ; for no one is competent to it. All, that is meant to be asserted, is, that when persons feel an emotion of approval in doing wrong, (that is, in doing what is condemned by the general moral sentiments of mankind, and by the written law of God ;) and yet have within their reach neglected sources of knowledge, which, on being laid open to the mind, would have caused different feelings, they are criminal for such neglect of the information before them, and, consequently, cannot under such circumstances be rendered otherwise than criminal by any internal approbation.

REFERENCES. More's *Enchiridion Ethicum* ; Wollaston's *Religion of Nature Delineated* ; Hutcheson's *Introduction to Moral Philosophy* ; Price's *Review of the Principal Questions in Morals* ; *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion*, (Lond. ed. 1758, anonymous,) *Ess. I.* ; Paley's *Moral and Political Philosophy* ; Gisborne's *Principles of Moral Philosophy together with Remarks on the Doctrines of Paley* ; Brown's *Lectures*, LXXXIII—LXXX. ; Stewart's *Historical Dissertation*, Pt. II. §. 1., &c.

## CHAPTER THIRTY SIXTH.

### THE PASSIONS.

§. 419. Various significations of the term, *passion*.

**T**HE term, *PASSION*, originally means suffering; this meaning is strictly conformable with its etymology from the Latin *PATIO*. It is employed in this sense, when in some writers we are told of the 'Saviour's passion.'

Again, it implies in some instances a strong predilection, a sort of enthusiastic fondness, for particular arts or pursuits. We say, that a person has a passion for music, or for painting; or that he is passionately fond of gardening or of some diversions.—Again, the word in question has another meaning; implying what we otherwise express by the word, *anger*. It is said of a man, that he is in a passion; that is, he is angry.

As the term, *PASSION*, is used here and in what follows, it denotes a state of mind, of which some simple emotion is always a part, but which differs from any single simple emotion, in being combined with some form of that state of the mind called *DESIRE*.—In consequence of this complexity, the passions have a character of permanency, which is not found to belong to any separate emotions. It is not easy to assign a distinction between the passions and affections; the terms are here used as synonymous.

## §. 420. Of the passion of love.

In pursuing the examination of this subject, we are first to consider the passion of LOVE. There are many modifications or degrees of this passion; the mere preference of regard and esteem, the warmer glow of friendship, and the increased feeling of devoted attachment. There are not only differences in degree, the passion itself seems to be modified, and to be invested with a different aspect, according to the circumstances, in which it is found to operate. The love, which we feel for our friends, is different from that, which we feel for a parent or brother; and both are different from that, which we feel for our country. But it is impossible to convey in words the precise distinctions, which may justly be thought to exist both in kind and degree. Such an attempt would only involve the subject in greater confusion.

Nor could we expect to succeed much better in giving a definition of the passion in general. Every one must be supposed to be acquainted with it from his own experience, to know what it is to love parents, and friends, and country; and we must, therefore, refer to that experience for a better idea of it, than can be conveyed by language. The difficulty here is precisely the same as that in explaining by words the simple ideas from the senses. The sweetness of honey or of sugar, the smell of the violet and of the rose, are better known by these mere names than by any description or definition. When we merely name the sensations, we virtually refer back the individual to his own experience; and when this is done, the necessity of a formal, and necessarily an imperfect definition is superseded.

Without undertaking, therefore, to give any thing in the shape of a precise and accurate definition of the passion, we may say something further, which shall give us some light as to its nature, considered, as a part of the physiology of the human mind.—The feeling is a complex one; and we may discover in it at least two elements; viz., an emotion of vivid delight in the contemplation of the object, and a desire of good to that object.

there will always be found in the object some quality or some excellence in the form, or in the intellect, or the moral traits, or in all combined, which is capable of exciting a pleasurable emotion. There is a pleasing feeling, antecedent to the desire of good to the object, which causes it; but this happy feeling continues to exist, and mingles with the subsequent kind desire. And it may be supposed to be a constant action and reaction: the desire of good increasing the strength of the pleasurable emotion, and the mere feeling of delight engaging the benevolent desire.—When the kind desire, as one of the elements of love, is not excited merely in consequence of our having experienced the antecedent pleasurable emotion, but in consequence of regarding that pleasurable emotion as indicative of qualities, to which the audible voice of nature pronounces, that our affections may be justly given, it is then a pure and exalting feeling. As to how far this purity of feeling exists, there can be no doubtedly be a difference of opinion; but just so far as it does, there is a glow of the heart, analogous to the emotional feelings of a higher and happier state of

#### §. 421. Of the passion of hatred.

The passion of HATRED is the opposite to that of love. As the latter was found to be complex, the former also is separated into opposite, though analogous elements, viz. an emotion of pain, and a desire of injury to the person or cause of the painful feeling. For a correct notion, however, of this passion, as well as of its opposite, we must resort to our own experience.—Some have maintained, that the violent affections, in the present condition of the world, are necessary and commendable; that without them, tyrannies and oppressions would come boldly forth into the community of mankind. It cannot be denied, that a constant watchfulness and of retribution is necessary; but it is so evident, that there is need of malevolence. The Supreme Being is a sovereign, who does not grant impunity to his subjects; but he is represented as dealing with the



feelings of a parent, and as anxious for the good of those, who have subjected themselves to his chastisements.

§. 422. Of sympathy.

Sympathy, by the common use of language, implies an interest in the welfare of others, and may be considered in two respects, being either an interest in their joy, or an interest in their sorrow. The sympathetic man falls in with the requisition of Scripture, rejoicing with those, who rejoice, and weeping with those, who weep. His heart kindles up with happiness at beholding the happy, and he sheds the tear for the miserable.—But that sympathy, which rejoices with the rejoicing, is only one of the forms of love. In an analysis of our passions, it is entitled to no separate place. Like love it is a feeling of delight, combined with benevolent desires towards the object of it. It is only the sympathy for sorrow, which can have a distinct consideration in the list of our passions.

Some have thought, that sympathy for sorrow is only a modification of love ; but we may discover a difference between them. We can sympathize in the griefs of those, in whom we are able to discern no pleasing qualities, and even with those, who are positive objects of hatred. We leave it to the feelings of any one to determine, Whether, if he saw even his enemy perishing with hunger in a dungeon, or his limbs broken on the rack, he would not harbour a relenting emotion, and be glad at his rescue ? If so, sympathy for grief is different from love, for we may sympathize with those, whom we do not, and cannot love ; and, consequently, is to be considered a distinct passion.

As the passion of love is a feeling of delight, combined with the desire of good to the object of it, and hatred is the opposite of it, being a painful emotion, attended with a desire of injury ; so the sympathy of grief seems to agree in some respects with both, and to disagree in other respects. It includes a painful emotion, as in hatred, and a desire of good or of relief to the object of it, as in love. The painful emotion, which is a part of the complex feeling of sympathy, does not differ from the simplest form

f sadness ; and is probably the same feeling, although in a less degree, with the sorrow of the person, in whose behalf our sympathetic interest is enlisted.

§. 423. Of anger.

The passion of anger does not appear to differ essentially in its nature from that of hatred. When the painful notion, and the desire of evil to the object of it, which is implied in hatred, arise suddenly and violently on the reception, or supposed reception of some injury, or from some other cause, if any can be imagined, the state of the mind is then called **ANGER**. That is to say, we suppose, anger is essentially the same with hatred, and differs from the ordinary forms of that passion chiefly in the circumstance of great suddenness and violence.—When the passion of anger is protracted, awaiting in all its power for some more favourable opportunity to show itself, it becomes **REVENGE**. We speak of such a state of the soul as revengeful.

The precept of St. Paul, “Be ye angry, and sin not,” (Eph. iv. 26.,) reminds us, that this passion is liable to exceed due limits, and also that we ought to cherish such considerations, as are likely to check and properly control its influence.—When we are angry, we should consider, in the first place, that we may have mistaken the motives of the person, whom we imagine to have injured us. Perhaps the oversight or crime, which we allege against him, is mere inadvertence. And it is possible, that his intentions were favourable towards us, instead of being, as we suppose, of a contrary character.—(2) We should consider, secondly, that the indulgence of this passion on slight occasions renders us contemptible in the sight of all round us ; it excites no pity, nothing but feelings of scorn ; and, therefore, instead of being a punishment to the cause or supposed cause of the affront, only increases our own misery.—(3) Let it be remembered also, that when the mind is much agitated by this passion, it is incapable of correct judgment ; actions, considered as the indications of feeling and character, do not appear in their true light

and the moral susceptibility is overborne and rendered useless. The saying of Socrates to his servant, "I would beat you, if I were not angry," although uttered by a Heathen, is not unworthy of the Christian philosophy.

(4) There is another consideration, which ought to prevent the indulgence of this passion, and to allay its effects; It is, that all have offended against the Supreme Being, and stand in need of pardon from Him. Every one, who knows his own heart, must see, and feel himself to be a transgressor. How pitiful is it, then, for man to talk largely of satisfaction and revenge, when he is every moment dependent on the clemency and forgiveness of a Being, whom he has disobeyed and disregarded!

There is a species of anger, termed **PEEVISHNESS** or **FRETFULNESS**, which often interrupts the peace and happiness of life. It differs from ordinary anger in being excited by very trifling circumstances, and in a strange facility of inflicting its effects on every body, and every thing within its reach. The peevish man has met with some trifling disappointment, (it matters but little what it is,) and the serenity of whole days is disturbed; no smiles are to be seen; every thing, whether animate or inanimate, rational or irrational, is out of place, and falls under the rebuke of this fretful being.—Genuine anger is like a thunder-shower, that comes dark and heavily, but leaves a clear sky afterwards. But peevishness is like an obscure, drizzling fog; it is less violent, and lasts longer. In general, it is more unreasonable and unjust, than violent anger, and would certainly be more disagreeable, were it not often, in consequence of being so disproportioned to its cause, irresistibly ludicrous.

#### §. 424. Of gratitude.

As anger is but one of the forms of hatred, **GRATITUDE** seems to be one of the forms of the general passion of love. Like the last named passion, it includes an emotion of pleasure or delight, combined with a desire of good or benevolent feeling towards the object of it. But we never give the name of gratitude to this combination of pleasure

ing and benevolent emotion, except it arise in reference to some benefit or benefits conferred.—A great part of that strong feeling, which is exercised by children toward parents, is that species of love, which is termed gratitude. They think of them, not only as possessing many qualities, which are estimable and lovely in themselves ; but as fond and unwearied benefactors. They cannot behold, without having their feelings strongly moved, their earnest disposition to relieve their sufferings, to supply their wants, to enhance their enjoyments.

Different individuals exhibit considerable diversity in the exercise of grateful emotions. Some receive the favours heaped upon them without exhibiting any visible returns of benevolent regard ; others are incapable of a passive reception of benefits, and are strongly affected, whenever they are conferred. This difference is probably owing in part to original diversities of constitution ; and is partly to be ascribed to different views of the characters and duties of men, or to other adventitious circumstances.

§. 425. Of pride.

**PRIDE** is a consciousness or belief of some superiority in ourselves over others, attended with a desire, that others should be sensible of it.—There are many modifications of this, no less than of the other passions. When it is very officious, and makes an ostentatious display of those circumstances, in which it imagines its superiority to consist, it is termed **VANITY**. When it discovers itself, not so much in the display of the circumstances of its superiority as in a contempt, and in sneering disparagements of the inferior qualities of others, it is termed **HAUGHTINESS** or **ARROGANCE**.—If the above notion of pride be correct, this passion cannot exist without implying a comparison of ourselves with others. The proud, in making this comparison, either are, or believe themselves to be superior in some respect to others ; this superiority, they are desirous, should be made known, when there is evidently no reason for it, except what may be found in the peculiar state of their own feelings. This limitation should go with the

definition, which has been given; for there may not only be superiority and a consciousness of it without pride, but under certain circumstances, (perhaps when ignorance is to be enlightened, or turbulence is to be subdued, or lawless vice is to be awed,) there may be even a desire of making it known, and yet without the passion in question.

The passion of pride is not limited to the possession of any one object or quality, or to any single circumstance or combination of circumstances. One is proud of his ancestry; another of his riches, and a third of the beauty of his dress or person. It is the same feeling in the statesman, and the jockey; in the leader of armies, and the hunter of hares and foxes; in the possessor of the princely palace, and of the well-wrought cane or snuff-box.

Some have thought, that many good results, connected with human enterprize and efforts, may be justly ascribed to the influence of this passion. On the other hand, it has been maintained, that there are other principles of action of a more generous and ennobling kind, which might accomplish, and ought to accomplish all, which has been attributed to this. Certainly, a little reflection, a little insight into our origin, infirmities, and wants, would tend to diminish the degree of it, if nothing more. "If we could trace our descents, (says Seneca,) we should find all slaves to come from princes, and princes from slaves. To be proud of knowledge, is to be blind in the light; to be proud of virtue, is to poison ourselves with the antidote; to be proud of authority, is to make our rise our downfall."

#### §. 426. Of fear.

**FEAR** is a simple emotion of pain, caused by an object, which we anticipate will be injurious to us, attended with a desire of avoiding such object or its injurious effects.

Having made desire a part of the passion of fear, and also of other complex states of the mind which involve emotions, of the passions of love, hatred, sympathy, anger, gratitude, and pride, it may have occurred, ere this, to ask.

What is meant by that term?—In answer, it must be acknowledged, that it is difficult to give a satisfactory explanation of it. We can, indeed, say, that desire is preceded by the idea of something, which is the object of it; and also that it is preceded by an emotion of pain or of delight. But on the examination of one's own feelings, it will be readily perceived, that both of these are different from the state of mind in question. "With the mere feelings [of desire,] says Brown, I may suppose you to be fully acquainted; and any attempt to define them, as feelings, must involve the use of some word exactly synonymous, or will convey no meaning whatever."

But to return to the passion under consideration. The strength or intensity of fear will be in proportion to the apprehended evil. There is a difference of original susceptibility of this passion in different persons; and the amount of apprehended evil will, consequently, vary with the quickness of such susceptibility. But whatever causes may increase or diminish the opinion of the degree of evil, which threatens, there will be a correspondence between the opinion, which is formed of it and the fearful passion.

When this passion is extreme, it prevents the due exercise of the moral susceptibility, and interrupts correct judgment of any kind whatever. It is a feeling of great power, and one which will not bear to be trifled with. It may serve as a profitable hint, to remark, that there have been instances of persons thrown into a fright suddenly, and perhaps in mere sport, which has immediately resulted in a most distressing and permanent mental disorganization.—In cases, where the anticipated evil is very great, and there is no hope of avoiding it in any way, the mind exists in that state, which is called **DESPAIR**.

#### §. 427. Of hope.

Such is the extensive influence of that state of the mind, to which we give the name of **HOPE**, that it deserves a separate consideration, although it cannot be reckoned, as a distinct passion. It is truly nothing more than a modification or form of desire. We desire a thing;

if there is but little probability of obtaining it, it is what is termed a *wish*; when there is an increase of probability, the wish becomes *hope*; and when the probability is still further increased, the hope becomes *expectation*, and expectation itself may be distinguished as weak or strong.

Consequently, *HOPE* may be predicated of every thing of whatever kind, where there is desire, whether it be a desire of good or of evil, for ourselves, or for others. When the desire is attended with so little probability as to be a mere *wish*, it is languid; when there is *hope*, it assumes a more vivid and enlivening aspect. We, accordingly, speak of 'gay' hope, of 'cheering,' or 'bright' hope, and regard it as spreading a sort of rapturous light over the distant objects, which it contemplates.

"With thee, sweet Hope! resides the heavenly light,  
 "That pours remotest rapture on the sight;  
 "Thine is the charm of life's bewildered way,  
 "That calls each slumbering passion into play."

The influence of that vividness and pleasure of desire, which we term hope, is very great. It is felt more, or less, in all the duties and situations of life. The school-boy is encouraged in his tasks by some hope of reward; and when grown up to manhood, he cheers himself, after a thousand disappointments, with some good in prospect. The poor peasant, who laboriously cultivates his few sterile acres, sees them in his anticipation, rich, and blooming, and prodigal of wealth. It proffers its aid in the chambers of the sick and suffering; and the victim of oppressive tyranny, the captive in the dungeon, is encouraged to summon up the fortitude, necessary to prolong his existence, by the hope, however poorly founded, of future deliverance.

#### §. 428. Of jealousy.

**JEALOUSY** is a painful emotion, caused by some object of love, and attended with a desire of evil towards that object.—The circumstance, which characterizes this passion and constitutes its peculiar trait, is, that all its bitterness

lity are inflicted on some one, whom the jealous  
 ves. The feeling of suspicious rivalry, which  
 sts between candidates for fame and power, is  
 s called jealousy on account of its analogy to this  
 —There are various degrees of jealousy from the  
 ere distrust and of watchful suspicion to its high-  
 sms. In general the strength of the passion will be  
 be in proportion to the value, which is attach-  
 object of it ; and is perhaps more frequently  
 persons, who have a large share of pride, than in  
 uch, in consequence of the habitual belief of their  
 riority, are likely to notice many trifling inadver-  
 nd to treasure them up as proof of intended neg-  
 h would not have been observed by others, and  
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erson under the influence of this passion is inca-  
 forming a correct judgment of the conduct of the  
 l, who is the object of it ; he observes every thing,  
 it the worst interpretation ; and circumstances,  
 another state of the mind, would have been to-  
 nocence, are converted into proof of guilt. Al-  
 oetry, it is no fiction ;

———“Trifles, light as air,  
 e to the jealous confirmations strong,  
 proofs of holy writ.

e it is justly said to be the monster, that ‘makes  
 it feeds on.’—This passion is at times exceeding-  
 . At one moment the mind is animated with all  
 gs of kindness ; the next, it is transported with the  
 workings of hatred, and then it is suddenly over-  
 with contrition. Continually vacillating between  
 mes of love and hatred, it knows no rest ; it would  
 ing destruction on the object, whom it dreads to  
 : than any other, and whom at times it loves more  
 other.—See Cogan’s Treatise on the Passions,  
 vn, LECTS. LX—LXV.



## CHAPTER THIRTY SEVENTH.

### EXCITED CONCEPTIONS OR APPARITIONS.

§. 429. Of excited conceptions and of apparitions in general.

**I**N this and the following chapter we shall proceed to give a somewhat new view of our mental susceptibility, but it will be one, by no means wanting either in interest or in importance. The action of the mind is not always uniform; it puts forth its exercises with greater or less degrees of intensity; and in some cases, as we shall have occasion to see, exhibits an utter and disastrous deviation from its ordinary laws.—Conceptions, the consideration of which is to be resumed in the present chapter, are those ideas, which we have of any absent objects of perception. But they are found to vary in degree of strength; and hence, when they are at the highest intensity of which they are susceptible, they are called vivified, or **EXCITED CONCEPTIONS**. They are otherwise called, when they have their origin in the sense of sight, **APPARITIONS**.

Apparitions, therefore, are appearances, which seem to be external and real, but which in truth have merely an interior or subjective existence; they are merely vivified or excited conceptions. Accordingly there may be apparitions, not only of angels, departed spirits, and celestial cities, but of landscapes, mountains, precipices, festive funeral processions, temples; in a word, of all visual conceptions, which we are capable of recalling.

## §. 430. Of the less permanent excited conceptions.

Excited conceptions, which are not permanent but are merely a momentary, although a distinct and real existence, are not uncommon.—A person, standing on the shore, and anxiously expecting to witness the immediate approach of his vessel, will sometimes see the image of it, and will be certain for the moment, that he has the object of his anticipations in view, although in truth there is no vessel in sight. That is to say; the conception, *idëa*, or image of the vessel, which it is evidently in the power of any one to form, who has previously seen one, is rendered so intense by feelings of anxiety, as to be the same effect, as if the real object were present, and the figure of it were actually pictured on the retina. Indeed these mental creations are sometimes found to exist, when there is not that degree of anxiety, which may be supposed to prevail in the present instance; as when on winter evenings we sometimes gaze on the flickering fires of the hearth, till we see in them the forms of human beings, the stems of trees, houses, landscapes. This at least was the experience of Cowper, who has made it the subject of the passage in the poem of the Task.

“Me oft has fancy, ludicrous and wild,  
 “Soothed with a waking dream of houses, towers,  
 “Trees, churches, and strange visages expressed  
 “In the red cinders, while with poring eye,  
 “I gazed, myself creating what I saw.”

Persons, sitting alone in a room, are sometimes interested by the supposed hearing of a voice, which calls to them. But in truth it is only their own internal conception of that particular sound, which happens at the moment to be so distinct, as to control their belief and impose it upon them for a reality. This is the whole mystery of what Boswell has related as a singular incident in the life of Dr. Johnson, that while at Oxford he distinctly heard another call him by his given name, although she was not there the very time at Litchfield. (See §. 119.)

§. 431. Of the connection between the mind and the

But there are other cases, remaining to be considered where the vividness of the conception is more perfect. In order to explain these, some remarks are to be made as to the proof of the connection between the mind and body, and of the influence of the bodily system over that of the intellect. A few well known facts will help to illustrate the influence.—(1) The effects of old age are first experienced in the bodily system. But by means of the influence of the bodily system, it generally affects the mental vigour in those, who are experiencing the vicissitudes of age, is in most cases evidently impaired. The intellectual system is hardly less deaf and blind, and stands hardly less in need of crutches to support the bodily.

(2) Violent, corporeal diseases in manhood, before they decay, takes place from age, often affect the power of thought. Persons have been known after a violent or violent attacks of any other kind, to lose entirely the power of recollection; a circumstance, which I have already had occasion to remark upon in the chapter on MEMORY.

(3) Many things of a stimulating nature, when introduced into the system, do in some way violently affect the mind. This is true, in particular, of the nitrous oxide gas. When it is inhaled in a considerable quantity, the conceptions are more vivid, associated trains of thought are of increased rapidity, and emotions are excited, corresponding to the acuteness of sensations and the vividness of ideas.

The gas, which is received into the system, operates in the first place upon the body merely; particularly by quickening the circulation of the blood, and also by supposing, by increasing the volume of that fluid.

There is another gas, the FEBRILE MIASMA, which is found, on being inhaled, to affect the mind also, by affecting the sanguineous fluid. But this gas diminishes instead of increasing the volume of blood; as is indicated by a small contracted pulse, and an increasing contraction of the capillaries. As in the case of the nitrous

gas, the mental exercises are rendered intense and vivid by the febrile miasma ; but the emotions, which are experienced, instead of being pleasant, are gloomy and painful. The trains of thought, which are at such times suggested, and the creations of the imagination are all of an analogous character, strange, spectral, and terrifying.\*

(4) In general, whenever the physical condition of the brain, which is a prominent organ in the process of perception, is affected, whether it be from a more than common fulness of the blood vessels, or from other causes, the mind itself will be found to be affected also ; and oftentimes in a high degree.—Many such facts clearly combine to show, that the mind is susceptible of new states, and of modifications of its present states, in consequence of alterations in the bodily system.

§. 432. 1st cause of permanently vivid conceptions or apparitions.  
Neglect of periodical blood-letting.

We have been led to see, (§. §. 119, 430,) that our conceptions or renovated ideas may be so vivid, as to affect our belief for a short time hardly less powerfully, than the original perceptions. But as in the cases referred to, there was not supposed to be an unsound or disordered state of the body, this extreme vividness of conception was exceedingly transitory. There are other cases of a more permanent character, which are worthy of no small notice in the history of the mind.—These last always imply a disordered state of the body, which we were taught in the last section is often attended with very marked effects on the intellect. And the first cause of them, which we shall notice, is the neglect of customary periodical blood-letting. The doctrine, that excited conceptions or APPARITIONS are attendant on a superabundance of blood, occasioned by this neglect, seems to be illustrated and confirmed in the following interesting narration.

§. 433. Excited conceptions or apparitions of Nicolai.

Nicolai was an inhabitant of Berlin, a celebrated book-seller, and naturally of a very vivid imagination as

\* See Hibbert's *Philosophy of Apparitions*, Pt. I

neither ignorant nor superstitious ; a fact, which some undoubtedly will esteem it important to know. The following account of the apparitions, which appeared to him, is given in his own words.

“ My wife and another person came into my apartment in the morning, in order to console me, but I was too much agitated by a series of incidents, which had most powerfully affected my moral feeling, to be capable of attending to them. On a sudden, I perceived, at about the distance of ten steps, a form like that of a deceased person. I pointed at it, asking my wife if she did not see it ? It was but natural that she should not see any thing ; my question, therefore, alarmed her very much, and she immediately sent for a physician. The phantom continued about eight minutes. I grew at length more calm, and being extremely exhausted, fell into a restless sleep, which lasted about half an hour. The physician ascribed the apparition to a violent mental emotion, and hoped there would be no return ; but the violent agitation of my mind had in some way disordered my nerves, and produced further consequences, which deserve a more minute description.

“ At four in the afternoon, the form which I had seen in the morning re-appeared. I was by myself when this happened, and being rather uneasy at the incident, went to my wife’s apartment, but there likewise I was persecuted by the apparition, which, however, at intervals disappeared, and always presented itself in a standing posture. About six o’clock there appeared also several walking figures, which had no connection with the first. After the first day the form of the deceased person no more appeared, but its place was supplied with many other phantasms, sometimes representing acquaintances, but mostly strangers ; those whom I knew were composed of living and deceased persons, but the number of the latter was comparatively small. I observed the persons with whom I daily conversed did not appear as phantasms, these representing chiefly persons who lived at some distance from me.

“ These phantasms seemed equally clear and distinct at all times, and under all circumstances, both when I was by

myself, and when I was in company, and as well in the day as at night, and in my own house as well as abroad ; they were, however, less frequent when I was in the house of a friend, and rarely appeared to me in the street. When I shut my eyes, these phantasms would sometimes vanish entirely, though there were instances when I beheld them with my eyes closed, yet, when they disappeared on such occasions, they generally returned when I opened my eyes. I conversed sometimes with my physician and my wife of the phantasms which at the moment surrounded me ; they appeared more frequently walking than at rest, nor were they constantly present. They frequently did not come for some time, but always re-appeared for a longer or shorter period, either singly or in company, the latter, however, being most frequently the case. I generally saw human forms of both sexes, but they usually seemed not to take the smallest notice of each other, moving as in a market-place, where all are eager to press through the crowd ; at times, however, they seemed to be transacting business with each other. I also saw several times people on horse-back, dogs and birds. All these phantasms appeared to me in their natural size, and as distinct as if alive, exhibiting different shades of carnation in the uncovered parts, as well as different colours and fashions in their dresses, though the colours seemed somewhat paler than in real nature. None of the figures appeared particularly terrible, comical, or disgusting, most of them being of an indifferent shape, and some presenting a pleasing aspect. The longer these phantoms continued to visit me, the more frequently did they return, while, at the same time, they increased in number about four weeks after they had first appeared. I also began to hear them talk ; these phantoms sometimes conversed among themselves, but more frequently addressed their discourse to me ; their speeches were commonly short, and never of an unpleasant turn. At different times there appeared to me both dear and sensible friends of both sexes, whose addresses tended to appease my grief, which had not yet wholly subsided : their consolatory speeches were  
dressed to me

when I was alone. Sometimes, however, I was accosted by these consoling friends while I was engaged in company, and not unfrequently while real persons were speaking to me. These consolatory addresses consisted sometimes of abrupt phrases, and at other times they were regularly executed."

As Nicolai was a person of information and of a philosophic spirit, he was able to detect and to assign the true cause of his mental malady.

He was, it is to be remembered, in the first place, a person of a very vivid fancy, and hence his mind was the more likely to be affected by any disease of the body. A number of years before the occurrences above related, he had been subject to a violent vertigo, which had been cured by means of leeches ; it was his custom to lose blood twice a year, but previously to the present attack, this evacuation had been neglected. Supposing, therefore, that the mental disorder might arise from a superabundance of blood and some irregularity in the circulation, he again resorted to the application of leeches.

When the leeches, were applied, no person was with him besides the surgeon ; but during the operation his chamber was crowded with human phantasms of all descriptions. In the course of a few hours, however, they moved around the chamber more slowly ; their colour began to fade, until, growing more and more obscure, they at last dissolved into air, and he ceased to be troubled with them afterwards.\*

§. 434. 2d cause of excited conceptions. Attacks of fever.

In violent attacks of fever there are sometimes excited conceptions ; particularly those, which have their origin in the sense of sight, and are known by way of distinction under the name of Apparitions. The ideas, which the sick person has, become increased in vividness, until the

\* Memoir on the Appearance of Spectres or Phantoms occasioned by Disease, with Psychological Remarks, read by Nicolai to the Royal Society of Berlin on the 28th of February 1799 ; as quoted by Hibbert, Pt. I, ch. 1.

mind, seeming to project its own creations into the exterior space, peoples the room with living and moving phantoms. There is a statement, illustrative of this view, in Nicholson's Philosophical Journal, (xv,) a part of which will be here repeated. The fever in this instance, of which an account is given by the patient himself, was of a violent character, originating in some deep-seated inflammation, and at first affecting the memory, although not permanently.

"Being perfectly awake, (says this person,) in full possession of memory, reason, and calmness, conversing with those around me, and seeing without difficulty or impediment every surrounding object, I was entertained and delighted with a succession of faces, over which I had no control, either as to their appearance, continuance, or removal.

"They appeared directly before me, one at a time, very suddenly, yet not so much so, but that a second of time might be employed in the emergence of each, as if through a cloud or mist, to its perfect clearness. In this state each face continued five or six seconds, and then vanished, by becoming gradually fainter during about two seconds, till nothing was left but a dark opaque mist, in which almost immediately afterwards appeared another face. All these faces were in the highest degree interesting to me for beauty of form, and for the variety of expression they manifested of every great and amiable emotion of the human mind. Though their attention was invariably directed to me, and none of them seemed to speak, yet I seemed to read the very soul, which gave animation to their lovely and intelligent countenances. Admiration and a sentiment of joy and affection when each face appeared, and regret upon its disappearance, kept my mind constantly rivetted to the visions before it; and this state was interrupted, only when an intercourse with the persons in the room was proposed or urged," &c.—The apparitions, which this person experienced, were not limited to phantasms of the human countenance, he also saw phantasms of books, and of parchment and papers containing printed matter. Nor were these effects exclusively con-



finer to ideas, received from the sense of sight ; at one time, he seemed to himself to hear musical sounds. That is ; his conceptions of sound were so exceedingly vivid, it was in effect the same, as if he had really heard melodious voices and instruments.

§. 435. 3d cause of apparitions and other excited conceptions.  
Inflammations of the brain.

Apparitions, and excited conceptions in general exist, in the third place, in consequence of inflammations and other diseases of the brain.—We may infer from certain passages in the most philosophical of poets, that Shakespeare had some correct notions of the influence of a disordered condition of the brain on the mental operation. We allude among others to the passage, where in explanation of the apparition of the dagger, which appeared to Macbeth, he says,

“ A dagger of the mind, a false creation,  
“ Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain.”

Beattie, who is favourably known, both as a poet and as a philosopher, has a passage, much to the same purpose.

“ And often where no real ills affright,  
“ Its visionary fiends, an endless train,  
“ Assail with equal, or superiour might,  
“ And through the throbbing heart, and dizzy brain,  
“ And shivering nerves, shoot stings of more than mortal pain.”

Whether the seat, or appropriate and peculiar residence of the soul, be in the brain or not, it seems to be certain, that this part of the bodily system is connected, in a very intimate and high degree, with the exercises of the mind ; particularly with perception and volition. Whenever, therefore, the brain is disordered, whether by a contusion, or by a removal of part of it, by inflammation, or in other ways, the mind will in general be affected in a greater or less degree.

It may indeed be said, that the immediate connection is not between the mind and the substance of the brain, but between the mind and the blood, which is thrown in

to that part of the system. It is no doubt something in favour of this notion, that so large a portion of the sanguineous fluid finds a circulation there; it being a common idea among anatomists, that at least one tenth of all the blood is immediately sent from the heart into the brain, although the latter is in weight only about the fortieth part of the whole body. It is to be considered also, that the effects, which are wrought upon the mind by the nitrous oxide, and the febrile miasma gas, are caused by an intermediate influence on the blood. On the other hand, it may be said, that there cannot be a great acceleration of the blood's motion, or increase of its volume, without a very sensible effect on the cerebral substance. And, therefore, it may remain true, that very much may justly be attributed to the blood, and still the brain be the proximate cause of alterations in the states of the mind.

§. 436. Of the facts having relation to the 3d cause of excited conceptions.

But here we stand in need of facts, as in all other parts of this investigation. The following statement, selected from a number of others not less authenticated, can be relied on.\*—A citizen of Kingston-on-Hull had a quarrel with a drunken soldier, who attempted to enter his house by force, at an unseasonable hour. In this struggle the soldier drew his bayonet, and striking him across the temples, divided the temporal artery. He had scarcely recovered from the effects of a great loss of blood on this occasion, when he undertook to accompany a friend in his walking match against time, in which he went forty two miles in nine hours. He was elated by his success, and spent the whole of the following day in drinking, &c.

The result of these things was an affection, probably an inflammation, of the brain. And the consequence of this was the existence of those vivid states of mind, which are termed apparitions. Accordingly our shopkeeper, (for that was the calling of this person,) is reported to have seen articles of sale upon the floor, and to have be-

\*See the *Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal*, Vol. vi. p. 288.

held an armed soldier entering his shop, when there was nothing seen by other persons present. In a word, he was for some time constantly haunted by a variety of spectres or imaginary appearances; so much so that he even found it difficult to determine, which were real customers, and which were mere phantasms of his own mind. The remedy in this case was blood-letting, and some other methods of cure, which are practised in inflammations of the brain. The restoration of the mind to a less intense and more correct action was simultaneous with that of the physical system.

§. 437. 4th cause of apparitions. Hysteria.

It is further to be observed, that people are sometimes troubled with apparitions in hysteria or the hysteric disease.—For the nature of this disease, which exists under a variety of forms, and is thought to be of a character somewhat peculiar, the reader is referred to such books as treat of medical subjects. Its effects on the mind are various. When the convulsive affections come on, the patient is observed to laugh and cry alternately, and altogether without any cause of a moral nature; so that he has almost the appearance of fatuity, or of being delirious. But apparitions or intensely vivid conceptions are among the more striking attendants of this disease. The subjects of it distinctly see every description of forms; men, women, dogs and other inferiour animals, balls of fire, celestial beings, &c. We can without doubt safely refer to the experience of those, who have been much conversant with instances of this disease, in confirmation of this.

The existence of the states of mind under consideration might, without much question, be found, on further examination, to connect themselves with other forms of disease. The subject is certainly worthy, whether considered in relation to science or to human happiness, of such further developements, as it is capable of receiving. But nothing further remains to be said here on the general subject of this chapter, except in the single instance of the effects of an excessive use of opium.

§. 438. Excited conceptions induced by the use of opium.

It will be sufficient on this topic to refer to a work, entitled *CONFESSIONS OF AN ENGLISH OPIUM-EATER*; not without merit in point of style, but chiefly valuable for affording some facts in respect to the mind. The author seems to have been naturally of a feeling and imaginative turn, and this intellectual vivacity was greatly increased by an inordinate use of opium; so that in the end his intellect was thrown into an unnatural and disorderly posture. Not that he was insane in the ordinary sense of the terms, but the action of his intellect was so excited as to be not according to nature. His mind created all sorts of phantoms, especially in the dark. At night when he lay awake in bed, vast processions passed along in mournful pomp; friezes of never-ending stories, that to his feelings were sad and solemn, he informs us, as if they were stories drawn from times before Oedipus or Priam, before Tyre, before Memphis. Whenever the night shades had fallen, whatever he happened to think upon, whether it were landscapes, or palaces, or armies in battle array, in a word, whatever was a subject of thought, and was capable of being visually represented, formed themselves into phantoms of the eye and swept before him in order and in distinctness, no less marked and imposing, than if the real objects themselves had been present.\*

**Notz.** The following extract is from the *Leper of Aost*, an interesting little work of Count Le Maistre.—“I yield (says the leper) to extraordinary impressions, which I feel only in these unhappy moments. Sometimes it is, as if an irresistible power were dragging me to a fathomless abyss. Sometimes I see nothing but bleak forms; when I endeavour to examine them, they cross each other with the rapidity of lightning, increase in approaching, and soon are like mountains, which crush me under their weight. At other times, I see dark clouds rise from the earth around me; they come over me like an inundation, which increases, advances, and threatens to engulf me; and when I try to rise in order to free myself from these dreadful images, it seems as if I were retained by invisible ties, which enchain all my powers. You will perhaps believe this to be merely dreams; *but I am not sleeping*. I see always the same objects, and these horrible sensations exceed all my other sensations.” *Leper of Aost*, p. 17.

## §. 439. Of ghosts and other spectral appearances.

GHOSTS are partly APPARITIONS, taking that term, as it has been illustrated, and in part mental illusions, arising from not viewing objects aright. In respect to ghosts, remark, (1) That they are seen most frequently in the dark, hardly any one pretending to have seen them in the day time. And this is a circumstance altogether in favour of the idea, that they are in all cases, although they cannot all be referred to one cause, mere deceptions practised on us, either by means of the senses, or by means of an excited internal conception. In the dark, as we are exposed to a greater variety of dangers than at other times, our feelings are in consequence excited in a greater or less degree, and, as there is a great dimness in the outlines of objects, they readily assume, when viewed under such circumstances, new, and various, and uncertain shapes.

(2) Let it be observed, as another circumstance attending these spectral appearances, that ghosts are seen most frequently among people of very little mental cultivation, among the ignorant. Uninstructed minds are generally the most credulous. If there were truly any beings in nature of this sort, and they were any thing more than imaginary appearances, persons, who were well-informed and philosophic, would stand a chance equally good with others, of forming an acquaintance with them.—From these two circumstances it seems to follow clearly, that many of these imaginary beings are the creations of a credulous and excited mind, viewing objects at an hour, when their outlines cannot be distinctly seen.

(3) It is to be remarked further, that ghosts, whenever they present themselves, are found to agree very nearly with certain previous conceptions, which persons have formed in respect to them. If, for instance, the ghost be the spirit of one, with whom we have been particularly acquainted, he appears with the same lineaments, although a little paler, and the same dress even to the button on his coat; the dress, in general, however, is white, corresponding to the colour of the burial habiliments; so that they

may be said to have a personal or individual, a generic, and, as some have maintained, a national character.

"They commonly appear, (says Grose, who has written on this subject,) in the same dress, they wore while living; though they are sometimes clothed all in white; but that is chiefly the churchyard ghosts, who have no particular business, but seem to appear *PRO BONO PUBLICO*, or to scare drunken rustics from tumbling over their graves. Dragging chains is not the fashion of English ghosts, chains and black vestments being chiefly the accoutrements of foreign spectres seen in arbitrary governments. Dead or alive, English spirits are free."

This circumstance also remains to be considered;

(4) When spirits have come from the dead to the living, it has generally been found, that these visitants were among the particular friends, although sometimes of the enemies of those, whom they came to see. This is very natural.—It is our friends and enemies whom we think most of; much more than of those, to whom we are unknown, and towards whom our feelings are indifferent.

A person has lost a very near friend by death; his soul is distressed, and amid the joys of life, which have now lost their charms, and amid its cares, to which he turns with a broken heart, he incessantly recalls the image so endeared to him. What wonder then, that his imagination, which, in the light and bustle of the day, was able to keep before itself the picture of the departed, should, in the stillness and shades of midnight, when remembrances multiply and feelings grow deeper and deeper, increase that picture to the size, and give to it the vivid form of real life!—These circumstances justify us in ascribing the existence of that supposed class of beings, called ghosts, to the two causes mentioned at the head of the section, viz. conceptions rendered inordinately intense, and objects actually seen, but under such circumstances as to be misrepresented.\*

NOTE. The principles, laid down in this chapter, illustrate various incidents, hitherto considered very remarkable, which are to be

## §. 440. Of the apparitions of the religious.

Individuals, under great religious excitement, frequently make mention of having seen apparitions. One has beheld angels, ascending to heaven, or descending on the ladder of Jacob ; bright companies, singing the song of Moses and the Lamb ; and the river of the water of life, clear as chrystal. Another has seen the Saviour in the most trying moments of the crucifixion ; and has no more doubt of having truly and visually beheld Him, than the disciple, Thomas, when he thrust his hand into his side.

This subject is one of a delicate nature, and on which we are greatly liable to be misunderstood. Knowing this, we shall decline either asserting or denying, that christians *may* see, and *have* seen angels, heaven opened, the Saviour, and the like ; since any thing we have in view, in the present section, does not require such assertion or denial.

But this proposition may probably be laid down without exciting opposition from any quarter ; That it is dangerous to rest one's hopes of a religious character on these visions. And without rudely setting at defiance the feelings and opinions, existing on this subject, we would inquire, Whether they cannot very often, as in instances already remarked upon, be traced to some disorder of the physical system ? Or, admitting, that the body is sound and under no special excitement, whether they may not be

found in history both ancient and modern. They help to illustrate, for instance, the alleged appearance of Cæsar's ghost to Marcus Junius Brutus on the plains of Philippi. Brutus was not only greatly fatigued, but his mind was exceedingly anxious ; and we may, therefore, well suppose, that the spectral apparition was merely an internal excited conception.—It is also worthy of inquiry, whether they may not account, in part at least, for a singular power of the Scotch Highlanders, called the second sight. Especially as they live in a dark and mountainous country, and their feelings in consequence are strong, and have a cast of melancholy. Such a state of feeling is favourable to the existence of excited conceptions or apparitions ; and apparitions, (that is, the seeing of things which are not present,) is implied in the exercise of the second sight.

merely our own thoughts, strengthened by reflection, rendered intense by desire?

“Alas! we listen to our own fond hopes,  
 “E’en till they seem no more our fancy’s children,  
 “We put them on a prophet’s robe, endow them  
 “With prophet’s voices, and then Heaven speaks in them,  
 “And that, which we would have be, surely shall be.”

Let it be remembered, that the salvation of the soul is of all others the most weighty concern; and that the evidences, by which it is to be sustained and secured, ought not to be permitted to rest on an uncertain foundation. The principles, therefore, of this chapter, and also those of the chapter on Sympathetic Imitation are worthy of the most serious attention, considered relatively to Christian experience. Especially as we have the Word of life, to which we are required to take heed as to a light shining in a dark place, and which fully points out the marks of a redeemed and gracious state; but without enumerating dreams, visions, apparitions, and mere bodily agitation, as included among those marks.

**NOTE.** In the London Quarterly of April, 1822, in an article on Nervous Affections, are some remarks on Emanuel Swedenborg. Whether they be philosophical and just, or not, the reader can judge. They are, at least, written with more temper and candour, than some of the criticisms on the life and writings of the individual, who is the subject of them.

“We have been looking over the life and writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, and the conclusion to which we come is this; that, if allowance is made, first, for a credulous and fanciful intellect, (there is among sane men an infinite variety in the susceptibility of belief,) and, secondly, for the use of allegorical instead of common language; if we had him alive, could catechise and cross-examine him about his statements, separate what was mere allegorical jargon, and what was mere matter of opinion, and get his actual experiences in plain language; much, if not all the mystery would vanish, without resorting to insanity for



an explanation. In the present age, philosophers credit nothing but what they perceive by sense, receive on satisfactory evidence, or infer by strict reason ; all notions, suggested by other impulses, they view with doubt or disbelief. Wieland, in his *Agathodamon*, conjectures, that, in the infancy of the human race, men did, as children do now, confound their past dreams with real occurrences ; that when they had been dreaming of a dead friend, they would think that they had been with him, and that thus has arisen the belief in ghosts. Berkeley was of opinion, that the reality of things consisted not in their outward existence, but in being perceived. It is a common belief with religious enthusiasts that strong inclination is a divine impulse. Now if from natural facility of conviction, or from religious hypothesis, Swedenborg believed that meditation carried to a certain intensity was reality, how easy for him to sit in his arm-chair ; shoot his soul into Heaven ; wander through its streets and squares ; behold its lofty buildings and splendid palaces, roofed with gold and floored with precious stones ; converse with its inhabitants dressed in white, or shining, or flame-coloured garments, and walk under trees with silver leaves, golden fruit, and rainbow flowers !"

## CHAPTER THIRTY EIGHTH.

### MENTAL ALIENATION.

§. 441. Of the misfortune of a disordered state of mind.

**T**HE mind of man, when in its full and unbiassed exercise, imparts a dignity to human nature, and is the foundation of its superiority over the irrational part of creation. This being the case, it follows, that when the due exercise of the intellectual powers is permanently disturbed, or when there is naturally some deficiency in them, the dignity of his nature is gone ; his ascendancy is lost, and, with the exception of his erect form, there is no mark to distinguish him from the brute. Nothing, therefore, can be a greater misfortune ; nothing can be more calamitous, than those mental disorders, of which we are to give some account.—The evils, to which the mind is subject, are many, differing in kind and degree, being hardly less numerous than the diseases of the body. But however numerous, and various, we shall treat of them all under the general head of MENTAL ALIENATION, which is but another name for mental disorders ; beginning with idiocy, and prosecuting the inquiry in respect to various other forms of mental disorganization.

§. 442. Degree of mental power in idiocy.

Persons, in the condition of idiocy, will be found to have but few ideas of any kind. This small number they are able to compare together, so far as to distinguish objects, in which there are any striking. . . Such;

however, is their weakness, and at times total incapacity of the susceptibility of feeling relations, that the class of abstract ideas, resulting from the perception of the relations of objects when they are compared together, are not only fewer than those of any other class, but are ill-defined and indistinct. These few ideas they are able to combine together, and form some simple propositions. They have the power of deducing inferences from the comparison of a number of consecutive propositions, that is, by reasoning, only in a very small degree. Their great feebleness of reasoning power is to be attributed partly to the fewness of the ideas and propositions, which they possess; partly, to the dulness of their susceptibility of perceiving relations, the exercise of which is always implied in the comparison of propositions; and partly, to a great weakness of memory. We never find an idiot, who can steadily attend to a long argument, and estimate the point and weight of its conclusion; whether it be the steps of a mathematical demonstration, or an argument of a moral nature.

Owing to this inability to compare propositions and deduce conclusions, the idiot is often unable to take care of himself; he knows no better than to run under the wheels of a carriage, or to set fire to the house, where he would probably be consumed. Hence it is not considered right in those, who are responsible for his conduct and preservation to leave him in situations, where he can do injury to himself or others. Whatever injury he may do, he is not considered accountable. The imbecility of mere intellectual power extends to the susceptibility of moral distinctions. He knows no right or wrong; moral blame or approbation.

This is a description of common cases of idiocy; but there are gradations in this, as well as in all other mental weaknesses and disorders. There are some, who need not to be closely watched by their relatives and friends, and are capable of some species of manual labour; but who cannot be safely entrusted with property, and are unequal to the management of affairs.

§. 443. Of occasions of idiocy.

IDIOTISM is sometimes natural ; that is, the causes of it exist from the commencement of life. In many of these cases, there is greater or less bodily mal-formation ; the skull is of a size less than common, and there is a disproportion between the face and the head, the former being larger in proportion than the latter. The bones of the head are asserted by Dr. Rush to be preternaturally thick ; and the consequence of this is a diminution of the internal capacity of the cranium.—“What appears most striking, (says Pinel, in giving an account of an idiot in the asylum, BICETRE,) is the extremely disproportionate extent of the face, compared with the diminutive size of the cranium. No traits of animation are visible in his physiognomy. Every line indicates the most absolute stupidity. Between the height of the head, and that of the whole stature, there is a very great disproportion. The cranium is greatly depressed, both at the crown and at the temples. His looks are heavy, and his mouth wide open. The whole extent of his knowledge is confined to three or four confused ideas, and that of his speech to as many inarticulate sounds.”\*

From this instance, which is one of the lowest forms of idiocy, and from others, where there was a similar conformation of the head, Pinel seems to be inclined to the opinion, that a mal-conformation of the head in particular is the cause of idiotism, when it exists from infancy.

That absence or weakness of intellectual power, which is termed idiocy, is often found to exist from other causes. Men of great mental ability have sometimes sunk into the state of idiotism, in consequence of too great application of the mind, combined with a disrelish for social intercourse, which would have checked, and probably have prevented such entire prostration of the intellect. The latter cause is thought to have co-operated in bringing on the fatuity of Dean Swift. He persisted in denying himself the relaxations of society, and thus lost the opportunity both of acquiring a fund of new ideas, and of renovating his

former stores of knowledge. His once vigorous mind collapsed into such weakness and ignorance, that he was at last confined in a hospital, which he had himself founded for idiots. Our countryman, Franklin, on the contrary, continued to employ himself, not only in reading and writing, but in conversation; he felt a lively interest in the welfare of his friends, and in the progress of all public enterprizes and institutions, and at the period of his death, in the 85th year of his age, discovered no weakness and decay of mind.

Idiocy appears, in some cases, to be induced by mere old age. The senses at that period of life become dull; the ideas received from them are less lively, than formerly; the memory fails, and with it the power of reasoning; and there is combined, with these unfavourable circumstances, a want of interest in persons and events.

Further; this state of the mind may be caused by various diseases, such as violent fevers, which at times suddenly disturb the mental powers, produce a temporary delirium, and then leave the intellectual faculties in a permanently torpid and inefficient condition. It may originate also in the abuse of ardent spirits, from great grief, from violent blows on the head, from sudden and great terror, &c. The idiocy, which is natural, and exists from infancy, has sometimes been distinguished from that, which is brought on by the above-mentioned and other causes in after life; but the mental condition being in both cases essentially the same, they may properly be considered together in one view. This species of mental alienation is generally found to be incurable.

#### §. 444. Illustrations of the causes of idiocy.

Great and sudden terror was mentioned, as one of the causes of idiocy. Very great and sudden excitements of any of the passions may produce the same effect. We know of no illustrations of this statement more striking, than the following from the interesting work of Pinel on *Insanity*.—"The feelings of individuals, endowed with acute sensibility, may experience so violent a shock, that

all the functions of the mind are in danger of being suspended in their exercises or totally abolished. Sudden joy and excessive fear are equally capable of producing this inexplicable phenomenon. An engineer proposed to the committee of public safety, in the second year of the [French] republic, a project for a new invented cannon, of which the effects would be tremendous. A day was fixed for the experiment at Meudon ; and Robespierre wrote to the inventor so flattering a letter, that, upon perusing it, he was transfixed motionless to the spot. He was shortly afterwards sent to Bicetre in a state of complete idiotism.

“ About the same time, two young conscripts, who had recently joined the army, were called into action. In the heat of the engagement, one of them was killed by a musket ball, at the side of his brother. The survivor, petrified with horror, was struck motionless at the sight. Some days afterwards he was sent in a state of complete idiotism to his father’s house. His arrival produced a similar impression upon a third son of the same family. The news of the death of one of the brothers, and the derangement of the other, threw this third victim into a state of such consternation and stupor as might have defied the powers of ancient or modern poetry to give an adequate representation of it. My sympathetic feelings have been frequently arrested by the sad wreck of humanity, presented in the appearance of these degraded beings : but it was a scene truly heart-rending to see the wretched father come to weep over these miserable remains of his once enviable family.”

§. 445. Of disordered or alienated external perceptions.

In the remarks made in some former chapters, (iv, v,) the SENSES, it will be recollected, were described as one of the great sources of our knowledge. But perception by means of the senses, otherwise called external perception and sometimes sensation, depends upon two things ; not only upon the objects of the senses, but upon the condition of the state of the mind.

and of the senses must be a right state, (that is, the common or ordinary state;) otherwise the perceptions of external objects will not be such as can be relied on. If either be defective or perverted, the perception will necessarily partake of a like defect or a like perversion. Hence it is often found, that defective and false external perceptions are attendant on a disordered or alienated state of the mind, when there is apparently no unsoundness in the senses. In very many cases, objects of sight, hearing, and touch do not appear the same to insane persons as to others. Not because their senses are less acute and they cannot see, feel, and hear as well as others; but because the interior requisite of perception, the mind, has broken loose from those laws it observes in others, and the observation of which is by its very constitution rendered necessary to right views of external objects.

Agreeably to this view we find, insane persons often mistake their friends and relations for others; and are at a loss as to the place where they are, although they may have been in it hundreds of times before. This derangement of perception is seen especially when they attempt to read a book. They no doubt see the letters no less than others, but the action of the mind not being such as to permit them to dwell upon them, and compare and combine them into words, they are unable to read; it is at least exceedingly difficult.—As the aid of the mind is as requisite in tactual as in visual perceptions, and is equally requisite in the perceptions from the senses of taste and of hearing, these views will be found to hold good in respect to all of them alike. Objects, that are presented to the sense of touch, do not appear the same as formerly. The mind, in consequence of its disordered action, is unable to arrange and interpret the sounds, which would once have discoursed to it wisdom and music. And thus the soul throws out its internal disorganization over multitudes of objects, that would have been otherwise grateful to the taste and to the feeling, pleasant to the ear and beautiful in vision.\*

\* See Dictionaire des Sciences Medicales, Art. Folie, (E—

. 446. Disordered or alienated association. Light-headedness.

The laws of the mind, as well as its mere perceptions states, may be disordered; for instance, the law of association. The irregular action of this great principle of intellectual nature is sometimes greater; at others less. There is one of the slighter forms of mental alienation from this cause, which may be termed LIGHT-HEADEDNESS; otherwise called by Pinel, demence, and by Dr. Rush, dissociation. Persons, subject to this mental disease, are sometimes designated as 'flighty,' 'hair-brained'; and when the indications of it are pretty decided, as a 'rattle cracked.'—Their disorder seems chiefly to consist in a deficiency of the ordinary power over associated ideas. Their thoughts fly from one subject to another with great rapidity; and, consequently, one mark of this state of mind is great volubility of speech, and almost constant motion of the body. This rapid succession of ideas and incessant volubility of tongue are generally accompanied with forgetfulness in a greater or less degree. And as the subject of this form of derangement is equally incapable of checking and reflecting upon his present ideas, and recalling the past, he constantly forms incorrect judgments of things. Another mark, which has been given, is diminished sensibility to external impressions.

§. 447. Illustration of this mental disorder.

Dr. Rush in his valuable work on the Diseases of the Mind has repeated the account, which an English clergyman, who visited Lavater, the physiognomist, has given of this singular character. It accurately illustrates this mental disorder.—“I was detained, (says he,) the whole morning by the strange, wild, eccentric Lavater, in various conversations. When once he is set a going, there is no such thing as stopping him, till he runs himself out of breath. He starts from subject to subject, flies from book to book, from picture to picture; measures your nose, your eye, your mouth, with a pair of compasses; pours forth a torrent of platitudes upon you; drags you, for a proof of dogmatism, to the closets, and unfolds ten thou-



sand drawings ; but will not let you open your lips to propose a difficulty ; crams a solution down your throat, before you have uttered half a syllable of your objection.

He is as meagre as the picture of famine ; his nose and chin almost meet. I read him in my turn, and found little difficulty in discovering, amidst great genius, unaffected piety, unbounded benevolence and moderate learning, much caprice and unsteadiness ; a mind at once aspiring by nature, and grovelling through necessity ; an endless turn to speculation and project ; in a word, a clever, flighty, good-natured, necessitous man.”\*

§. 448. Partial mental alienation by means of the imagination.

Men of sensibility and genius, by giving way to the suggestions of a melancholy imagination, sometimes become mentally disordered. Not that we are authorized to include these cases as among the more striking forms

\*NOTE. The late professor Fisher of New Haven has left a statement, illustrative of this inordinate mental affection. Like that of Nicolai, it is the more valuable in coming from a scientific man, as the narration is in consequence placed above any suspicion of mistake.—“To whatever subject (he says) I happened to direct my thoughts, my mind was crowded with ideas upon it. I seemed to myself able to wield the most difficult subjects with perfect ease, and to have an entire command over my own train of thought. I found myself wonderfully inventive ; scarce a subject presented itself in which I did not seem to myself to perceive, as it were by intuition, important improvements. I slept but a part of the night, my mind being intensely occupied with planning, inventing, &c. All the writing that I did was done in the utmost hurry. Ideas crowded upon me five times as fast as I could put down even hints of them, and my sole object was to have some memorial by which they might be recalled. I was employed the whole time in the most intense meditation ; at the same time, thinking never seemed to me to be attended with so little effort. I did not experience the least confusion or fatigue of mind. My thoughts flowed with a rapidity that was prodigious, and the faculties of association, memory, &c., were wonderfully raised. I could read different languages into English, and English into Hebrew, with a fluency which I was never before or since master of. During the whole time, though I was in a low state of health, I never felt the least pain or fatigue of body.”

of insanity ; they in general attract but little notice, although sources of exquisite misery to the subjects of them. But such are the extravagant dreams, in which they indulge ; such are the wrong views of the character and actions of men, which their busy and melancholy imaginations are apt to form, that they cannot be reckoned persons of truly sound minds. These instances, which are not rare, it is difficult fully to describe ; but their most distinguishing traits will be recognized in the following sketch from Madame de Stael's *Reflections on the Character and Writings of Rousseau*.

"His faculties were slow in their operation, but his heart was ardent : it was in consequence of his own meditations, that he became impassioned : he discovered no sudden emotions, but all his feelings grew upon reflection.

"Sometimes he would part with you, with all his former affection ; but if an expression had escaped you, which might bear an unfavourable construction, he would recollect it, examine it, exaggerate it, perhaps dwell upon it for a month, and conclude by a total breach with you. Hence it was, that there was scarce a possibility of undeceiving him ; for the light, which broke in upon him at once, was not sufficient to efface the wrong impressions, which had taken place so gradually in his mind. It was extremely difficult, too, to continue long on an intimate footing with him. A word, a gesture, furnished him with matter of profound meditation ; he connected the most trifling circumstances like so many mathematical propositions, and conceived his conclusions to be supported by the evidence of demonstration.

"I believe, (she further remarks,) that imagination was the strongest of his faculties, and that it had almost absorbed all the rest. He dreamed rather than existed, and the events of his life might be said, more properly, to have passed in his mind, than without him : a mode of being, one should have thought, that ought to have secured him from distrust, as it prevented him from observation ; But the truth was, it did not hinder him from attempting to observe ; it only rendered his observations erroneous.

That his soul was tender no one can doubt, after having read his works ; but his imagination sometimes interposed between his reason and his affections, and destroyed their influence ; he appeared sometimes void of sensibility ; but it was because he did not perceive objects such as they were. Had he seen them with our eyes, his heart would have been more affected than ours."

§. 449. Disordered imagination. First form of hypochondriasis.

One of the slighter forms of hypochondriasis can perhaps be traced to inordinate workings of the imagination. The mind of the sufferer is fixed upon some unpromising and gloomy subject ; probably one, which has particular relation either to his present or future prospects. He gives it an undue place in his thoughts, dwelling upon it continually. His imagination hovers over it, throwing a deeper shade, on what is already dark. Thus the mind becomes disordered ; it is broken off from its ordinary and rightful mode of action ; and is no longer what it was, nor what nature designed it should be.

The mental alienation, resulting from a melancholy imagination, is the more deplorable, because it is generally found to be connected with exquisite sensibility, and often with great mental power. Nothing but a warm heart and great ability in combination could originate and frame together the elements of such ideal exaggerations.

Persons, exposed to this mental disorder, should take the alarm ; and happy will it be for them, if they can be excited to some decided effort by the future misery, which they are preparing for themselves. They should strenuously endeavour to demolish the world, which their imaginations have created, and come out from their solitude into more active and busy life.

" Go, soft enthusiast ! quit the cypress grove,  
 " Nor to the rivulet's lonely moanings tune  
 " Your sad complaint. Go, seek the cheerful haunts  
 " Of men, and mingle with the bustling crowd ;  
 " Lay schemes for wealth, or power, or fame, the wish

"Of nobler minds, and push them night and day,  
 "Or join the Caravan in quest of scenes,  
 "New to your eyes, and shifting every hour,  
 "Beyond the Alps, beyond the Apennines.

§. 450. Insanity or alienation of the power of belief.

In men of sane minds we find great diversities in the susceptibility of belief. Whatever may be the cause of it, it is very obvious, that the same circumstances extort a readier and stronger assent from some than others. There are three classes of persons, in whom this faculty or susceptibility appears to be disordered.—(1) The first class are those, who seem incapable of believing any thing, which they are required to receive on the testimony of others. They must see it with their own eyes; they must hear it, or handle it for themselves; they must examine it by square, rule, and compass. They remind one of the Savage, who complained, when something was proposed for his belief, "that it would not believe for him." The causes of this singular inability are worthy of more inquiry, than has hitherto been expended upon them. When it is very great, it is a mark of the approach or actual existence of idiocy.—(2) There is another class of persons, who plainly show a derangement of this power, by their readiness to believe every thing. No matter how incongruous or improbable a story is, it is received at once. They take no note of dates, characters, and circumstances; and as they find nothing too improbable to believe, they find nothing too strange, marvellous, and foolish to report. This state of mind is frequently an accompaniment of light-headedness.—(3) There are other cases, where the alienation of belief is not general, but particular. There is nothing peculiar and disordered in its ordinary action, but only in respect to particular facts. That is, certain propositions, which are erroneous and absurd, are received by the disordered persons as certain; and nothing can convince them of the contrary. One believes himself to be a king; another, that he is the prophet, Mahomet; and various other ab d by them,

as undoubtedly true. On all other subjects they appear to be rational ; but the alienation or insanity of belief is evident, as soon as their cherished errors are mentioned.

§. 451. Same subject continued. 2d form of hypochondriasis.

In the remarks on a disordered imagination, it has already come in our way to give an account of one form of hypochondriasis. There is another, and still more striking form, connected with an alienation of the power of belief. As in all other cases of hypochondriasis, the subject of it suffers much mental distress. He is beset with the most gloomy and distressing apprehensions, occasioned, not by exaggerated and erroneous notions in general, but by some fixed and inevitable false belief.—One imagines, that he has no soul ; another, that his body is gradually but rapidly perishing ; and a third, that he is converted into some other animal ; or that he has been transformed into a plant. We are told in the Memoirs of Count Maurepas, that this last idea once took possession of the mind of one of the princes of Bourbon. So deeply was he infected with this notion, that he often went into his garden, and insisted on being watered in common with the plants around him. Some have imagined themselves to be transformed into glass, and others have fallen into the still stranger folly of imagining themselves dead.

§. 452. Of intermissions of hypochondriasis and of its remedies.

The mental disease of hypochondriasis is understood to imply, as a general statement, a feeling of gloom and depression ; but this depressed feeling does not exist in all cases in the same degree. In all instances it is a source of no small unhappiness ; but in some the wretchedness is extreme. The greatest bodily pains are light in the comparison. It is worthy of remark, however, that the mental distress of hypochondriasis is in some persons characterized by occasional intermissions. An accidental remark, some sudden combination of ideas, a pleasant day, various other causes are found to dissipate the gloom of mind. At such times there is not unfrequently a

high flow of the spirits, corresponding to the previous extreme depression.—As this disease, even when mitigated by occasional intermissions, is prodigal in evil results, it becomes proper to allude to certain remedies, which have sometimes been resorted to.

(1) The first step towards remedying the evil is to infuse health and vigour into the bodily action, especially that of the nervous system. The nerves, it will be recollected, are the great medium of sensation, inasmuch as they constitute, under different modifications, the external senses. Now the senses are prominent sources of belief and knowledge. Consequently when the nervous system, (including of course the senses,) is in a disordered state, it is not surprising, that persons should have wrong sensations and perceptions, and, therefore, a wrong belief. If a man's nerves are in such a state, that he feels precisely as he supposes a man made of glass would feel, it is no great wonder, when we consider the constitution of the mind, that he should actually believe himself to be composed of that substance. But one of the forms of the disease in question is essentially founded on an erroneous, but fixed belief of this kind. Hence in restoring the bodily system to a right action, we shall correct the wrong belief, if it be founded in the senses; and in removing this, we may anticipate the removal of that deep-seated gloom, which is characteristic of hypochondriasis.—(2) Whenever the belief, whether particular or general and whatever it may be founded on, involves considerations of a moral nature, the hypochondriasis may sometimes be removed, or at least alleviated, by the application of moral motives. If, for instance, the mental disease have arisen from some supposed injury, it is desirable to suggest all well-founded considerations, which may tend to lessen the sufferer's estimate of the amount of injury received. When the injury is very great and apparent, suggestions on the nature and duty of forgiveness are not without effect.

(3) As all the old associations of the hypochondriac have been more or less visited and tainted by his peculiar malady, efforts should be ~~made~~ <sup>made</sup> to hem up and

remove them from the mind, by changes in the objects, with which he is most conversant, by introducing him into new society, or by travelling. By these means his thoughts are likely to be diverted, not only from the particular subject, which has chiefly interested him ; but a new impulse is given to the whole mind, which promises to interrupt and banish that fatal fixedness and inertness, which had previously encumbered and prostrated it.

§. 453. Of the powers of reasoning in the partially insane.

It will be noticed, so far as we have gone in that part of the general subject of mental alienation usually known under the name of insanity, we have considered the powers of the mind separately. Every susceptibility of the mind, which can be distinguished from other susceptibilities, may become alienated and disordered. Having considered perception, association, imagination, and belief, it falls to us next to consider the operations of the reasoning power in persons, who are partially insane.

It is to be kept in mind, that, in all cases except delirious or total insanity, (upon which something remains to be remarked,) the insane person may be expected to be in the full and unbiassed possession of the reasoning power to a certain extent ; the defect or alienation of reasoning is observed chiefly when it has relation to certain subjects, in respect to which the belief is affected. When the train of reasoning leads him within the range of that particular subject, we at once discover, that the intellect is disordered. So that the defect of reasoning in persons partially insane, (making allowances for peculiarities to be ascribed to differences in the action of the associating principle,) seems to consist not so much in the mode of connecting propositions, and in the conclusions, as in the premises. The insane person, for instance, reasons correctly in requiring for himself the homage, suited to a king, and in expressing dissatisfaction on account of its being withheld ; but he commits an essential error in the premises, which assume, that he actually possesses that station.—The following illustration from a deser-

vedly favourite romance may assist in the better understanding of this part of our subject.

§. 454. Instance of partial alienation of the reasoning power in the character of Don Quixote.

CERVANTES represents the hero of his work, as having his naturally good understanding perverted by the perusal of certain foolish, romantic stories, falsely purporting to be a true record of knights and of deeds of chivalry. These books, containing representations of dwarfs, giants, necromancers, and other preternatural extravagance, were zealously perused, until the head of Don Quixote was effectually turned by them. Although he was thus brought into a state of real mental derangement, it was limited to the extravagancies, which have been mentioned; on other subjects he was rational; and could his mind have been kept free from its knight-errant delusion, he would probably, like thousands of others, have sustained merely the character of a reputable citizen in his native village, unknown to romance and to fame.

“In all his conversations and replies, (Bk. iv. ch. 23,) he gave evident proofs of a most excellent understanding, and never ‘lost the stirrups,’ except on the subject of chivalry.” On this subject he ‘was crazed.’—Bracing his shield, therefore, and brandishing his lance, he declares to his credulous attendant, (Bk. iii. ch. 6,) that strange perils and vast adventures are reserved for him; that he is ordained to re-establish the knights of the Round Table, and that his fame will exceed that of the Tablantes and the Olivantes.

When the barber and curate visited him on a certain occasion, the conversation happened to turn on what are termed reasons of state, and on modes of administration; and Don Quixote spoke so well on every topic, as to convince them, that he was quite sound, and had recovered the right exercise of his judgment. But something being unadvisedly said about the Turkish war, the Knight at once remarked with much solemnity and seriousness, that his majesty had nothing to do, but to issue a proclamation,



commanding all the knights-errant in Spain to attend his court on such a day ; *and although not more than a dozen should come, among these one would be found, alone be sufficient to overthrow the whole Turkish power.*

When the subject of conversation turned to a subject which had so near a connection with shields, arms, and all the associations of chivalry, it came into the range of his malady.—In reading the book, these remarks have reference, if we keep in mind the mental state of its hero, we shall see an admirability in its narrations, and a truth to nature, which otherwise might not be observed.

§. 455. Readiness of reasoning in the partially insane and

Those, who have been personally acquainted with the intellectual condition of the partially insane, have sometimes observed in them great quickness of thought in some little emergencies, and an unusual degree of coolness. When, for instance, an attempt has been made to restrain and confine them, they steadily and promptly resist the motions of their pursuers ; they rapidly decypher the intentions from their countenance ; and cause their pursuers a degree of perplexity. In particular it has been observed in some instances, that they discover more clearness of expression, and rapidity of deduction, than of a perfectly sound mind, or than themselves could have exhibited before their derangement. This singular phenomenon is to be briefly explained.

The unusual quickness of deduction and of expression, which has sometimes been noticed in partially insane persons, may be referred to two causes ; First, an unusual excitement of the attention, and of all the intellectual powers ; And, secondly, a removal of those checks, which attend the sober and the rational in their reasoning.

Some of the checks, which retard the process of reasoning in the case of men, whose powers are in a good state, are these.—(1) There is a distrust of phrases, and a fear of mistakes from the ambiguity and vagueness of

1.—The object of a rational man is supposed to be  
 1. to arrive at truth, and not merely to gain a victory. He,  
 2. fore, feels anxious, not only to employ terms, which  
 3. are to himself proper, but which shall be rightly under-  
 4. stood by his opponent. But the irrational man, as might  
 5. be expected, does not find himself embarrassed with con-  
 6. siderations of this nature.—(2) A second obstruction to  
 7. truth and promptness in argumentation, in the case of  
 8. overminded and rational, is this; They fear, that they  
 9. may not be in possession of all those premises, on which  
 10. a solution will be found in the event to depend.—Many  
 11. debates are carried on without previously forming an ac-  
 12. quaintance with those facts, which are necessarily and  
 13. inevitably involved. While disputants of sound minds  
 14. entertain any suspicion on this point, and know not but it will  
 15. soon be lost, they of course feel their interest in the dis-  
 16. cussion much diminished.—(3) The third circumstance,  
 17. which reference was had, is this; The influence of  
 18. social feelings of propriety and of good sense, which or-  
 19. dinary govern men in the full exercise of their powers.  
 20. The disputant feels himself under obligations to profess  
 21. deference for his opponent; it is due to the customary  
 22. usages of society. He is sometimes restrained and embar-  
 23. rassed by what he considers due to those, who are present  
 24. near the argument. He is particularly careful to say  
 25. nothing foolish, absurd, or uncharitable.—All these  
 26. considerations weigh nothing with the insane person. He is not  
 27. troubled about exactness of expression, or the observance  
 28. of ceremonies, but strangely rushes, as it were, upon the  
 29. main points of the controversy, regardless of all minor  
 30. considerations.\*

§. 456. Of the alienation or insanity of the passions.

We come now to some species of mental alienation,  
 more formidable, than those hitherto mentioned. They  
 are not exclusively limited in their effects to the subjects of  
 them; but are sources of loss, danger, and injury to others.

is not the indulgence of one passion merely, to which the remark applies, but all.—The form of insanity, to which the remarks in this, and the two preceding sections, have relation, is otherwise known, as insanity of the will. But they are the same thing ; with correct views of the mind, we cannot separate them. We always find the will, the mental choice or determination, coinciding with the preponderating motives. Inasmuch, therefore, as we have already seen, that nothing has, or can have the character of a motive, independently of the affections, it follows, that there is no act of the will, independently of a particular state of the affections, that is, of the passions. Consequently, the insanity of the affections or passions involves, and implies insanity of the will.

§. 459. Of total insanity or delirium.

The insanity of the passions was characterized as insanity without delirium ; because the disease or alienation exists rather in that part of our mental constitution, called the affections or passions, than in what are distinctively termed the intellectual powers ; although its paroxysms may be so violent as to pervert for a short time the entire mental action. But delirious insanity implies a perverted and disordered state of the whole soul ; of the emotions and passions as well as of the purely intellectual powers. It reaches and controls alike the powers of perception, of association, of belief and reasoning, and the passions of sympathy, love, hatred, and fear. Not a single intellectual susceptibility, nor a single affection, retains a correct and consistent action, although they may not all be perverted and deranged in an equal degree. Hence it is not only easily distinguished from the mere insanity of the passions, but from partial insanity in general, which implies an alienation of only one of the intellectual powers, or at most of a part of them.

The emotions and passions, attendant on delirious insanity, are sometimes exceedingly marked and strong, whether of rage, grief, or gaiety ; and are accompanied

with violence of action. Hence it is sometimes termed **FUROR** or madness, and the subjects of it maniacs.

§. 460. Of perception in cases of delirious insanity.

As the insanity of delirium is a combination of the various forms of partial insanity, there will of course be a derangement of the powers of perception. The senses of taste, touch, smell, hearing, and sight may be all affected; but particularly the sense of sight.

In visual perception, all objects at first seem to touch the eye. Our estimate of distance by the sight is not an original, but an acquired perception. What we term perception of distance, therefore, always presupposes certain preceding acts of the mind. But in delirious insanity the power of judging is subverted and lost. Hence the delirious man often mistakes in the perception of distance, and it is no uncommon thing to find him attempting to throw himself from the windows of an upper story, or down the brink of a precipice. Such attempts can be accounted for on no other supposition, than a mistake of sight, except in some instances of very violent paroxysms, or of a permanent inclination to self-destruction.

The same causes, which perplex their perceptions of distance, confuse their notions of extension, of the form of bodies, and of the outlines of any object of sight whatever. Hence delirious persons, as in cases of partial insanity, are found to experience great difficulty in reading a book, and often confound objects and persons, in which there are abundant marks of difference. It is not only obvious from the nature of external perception, but is well ascertained from the confessions of maniacs, who have recovered, and have remembered what passed in their delirium, that there may be a derangement of the visual perception so great, as to occasion the most absurd mistakes.

They sometimes see objects and persons, which are not present. This fact may in part be explained in the same way, as those mental states, which we have termed apparitions. Hence madmen are, as they suppose, surrounded

at times with demons, angels, bodies of armed men, &c. They declaim, put themselves in attitudes of defence, violently beat the air, cry out for help, gain victories; all occasioned by these false or mistaken appearances.

§. 461. Of association in delirious insanity.

In the form of insanity, which is termed DELIRIOUS, the law of association or suggestion is found to be greatly affected. Rapidity of association was given, as a characteristic of that form of partial insanity, which was termed lightheadedness or 'dementia.' But in delirium it often exists in a far more striking degree. In lightheadedness, the indirect power, which is retained and exercised by the will over trains of thought, is only diminished; in delirium it is often wholly annulled. Every new object, every new countenance, every noise heard in the room, where the delirious person is, or noises, that are heard from without, indeed every thing, with which thoughts and feelings have been formerly associated, revives those ancient trains of mental acts. They are poured in upon him like a flood; and it is easier to conceive, than describe what a tumultuous chaos the mind in such a condition must be. When we consider, that these uncalled for trains of thoughts are thrown in upon the maniac, when his system is in great nervous excitement, and that he is unable to resist or to regulate the instantaneous transference of the mind from subject to subject, it is no wonder, that he should exhibit much external agitation, wildness of countenance, violence of gestures, outcries, &c.

It is further to be remarked here, that the utter inability of the madman to control the train of associated thoughts is one cause of the perversion of the power of perception. It appeared in the chapter on Dreaming, (§. 261.) that when our conceptions of things are not susceptible of any guidance and control from the will, they have a tendency to take the place of, and appear to us much the same, as the original perceptions. This is one cause, why they mistake their mere thoughts for beings, the mere workings of the mind for external and local existences.

§. 462. Illustration of the above section.

The following account of the rapid mental transitions of an insane person in the New Bethlem Hospital, London, will go to confirm, and illustrate what has been said. Like all characteristic traits of insanity, it is a melancholy picture. Difficult as it is to conceive, that such an endless series of topics should be crowded into the mind in a space so short, it is only what is realized in all cases of delirious insanity, where a derangement of the laws of association is the prominent trait.—“ Wholly unlimited by the identities of time, place, or person, he instantly accommodates each to his fancy, and in a moment he is any where, and every where, and any body, by turns. At one time he imagines himself to be the Lord Chancellor, or, as he emphatically styles himself, ‘ Young Baggs ;’ and no mortal tongue ever maintained the loquacity of the law, or talked with more incessant volubility, than his imaginary lordship. He would decide ten thousand causes in a day ; he would accuse, try, condemn, and execute whole nations in a breath. His language was as wild and far-fetched as his fancy was various ; topics of all kinds seemed to come tumbling into his mind, without order or connexion. Of every name he heard mentioned he instantly became the personal representative, and says, ‘ I am he ;’ thus he is by turns Bonaparte, the King, the Duke of Wellington, Lord Londonderry, the Persian Ambassador, Mr. Pope, Homer, Smollett, Hume, Gibbon, John Bunyan, &c.

“ He is successively a Hottentot, a Lascar, a Spaniard, a Turk, a Jew, a Scotsman. He has been in all situations and occupations of life, according to his own account ; a potboy at Hampstead, a shoeblack, a chimney-sweeper, an East-India Director, a kennel-raker, a gold-finder, an oyster-woman, a Jew cast-clothesman, a police justice, a judge, a keeper of Newgate, and, as he styles it, ‘ His Majesty’s law iron-monger for the home department :’ nay, he has even been Jack Ketch, and has hung hundreds ; he has been a soldier, and has killed thousands ; a Portuguese, and pedlar, and scores of Jew pedlar, and cheated all the members of the Chamber of Commerce for London, and betrayed

his constituents ; a Lord Mayor, a bishop, an admiral, a dancing-master, a Rabbi, Grimaldi in the pantomime, and ten thousand other occupations, that no tongue or memory but his own could enumerate. The specimen just given may serve as a sample of what is passing in his fancy."

§. 463. Of the memory in connection with delirious insanity.

While the other states and laws of the mind, such as perception, association, and reasoning, are disordered, the memory does not remain unaffected. The past life of the delirious person is an utter chaos. Such is the rapidity, with which thoughts crowd in upon him, that he is unable for this reason, if there were no other, to arrange, and classify, and refer them to their proper periods. He may remember for a few moments, perhaps for a few hours. He may revengefully treasure up some act of punishment for a much longer time ; but this does not affect the truth of the general statement. The heterogeneous confusion of his own intellect might be assumed, as a fit symbol of his notions of the great multitude of facts, which have taken place in the past.—See here then the picture of the mind, that noble fabric, in the more formidable stages of delirium—the power of perception disordered in all its forms— the laws of association disturbed and torn from the guidance of the will—the susceptibility of belief perverted—the memory gone, and with it the world of the past—the reasoning power, and with it the world of the future. This cumbersome mass of intellectual ruins is convulsed and rendered still more hideous, by the demoralization and unrestrained impulses of the passions.

NOTE. There is sometimes a peculiar, but transitory state of mind, bordering on partial insanity, which deserves a mention here ; although it is experienced in persons, who are sane. It is a strange propensity in a person to do in certain situations those things, which, if done, would clearly prove him deranged. The instances of these very sudden and singular impulses are probably not numerous.

As an illustration, a person of a perfectly sane mind acknowledged that whenever he passed a particular bridge, he felt a slight inclination to throw himself over, accompanied with some dread, that his inclination might hurry him away.

§. 464. Of the causes of the different kinds of insanity.

Some of the causes of idiocy were mentioned in a former section ; and something is to be remarked here of the causes of the different forms of that mental alienation, called insanity.—The causes of insanity, whether partial or delirious, are of two kinds, MORAL, and PHYSICAL.

All diseases, which violently affect the physical system, such as epilepsy, fevers, and apoplexy, also injuries of the brain, &c., indirectly affect the mind, and may cause permanent insanity.—It is worthy of remark also in regard to this form of mental alienation, that it is in some degree hereditary ; hence it is often said of particular families, that they are predisposed to insanity. The father, son, and grandson have not only been known to become successively insane, but the derangement has sometimes taken place in each case, in the same year of their life.

There are also various moral causes of mental alienation. It has been caused, among other circumstances of a moral nature, by disappointed ambition. Disappointment in mercantile and other speculations, and in any ardent expectations whatever, often has the same effect. Erroneous religious opinions, and great excitements of feeling on religious subjects have contributed towards supplying lunatic hospitals. An unrestrained indulgence of any of the passions is found to be attended with the same results.

We find a fruitful source of mental derangement in the vicissitudes of political events. A recent writer in a French medical work says, that he could give a history of the political revolutions in France from the taking of the Bastille, down to the return of Bonaparte from Elba, by detailing the causes of certain cases of insanity.\*—It appears from reports from insane hospitals, that moral causes of insanity are more numerous, than physical. But in many cases the influence of both is combined together.

\* Dictionnaire des Sciences Medicales, Art. Folie, (Esquirol.)  
See also Des Causes Morales et Physiques des Maladies Mentales  
par F. Voisin ; Influence des institutions politiques.



## §. 465. Of moral accountability in mental alienation:

It is in some respects a difficult inquiry, Whether men, who are in a state of mental alienation, are morally accountable? Whether they are subjects of merit or demerit? And if so, in what cases, and how far?—In determining these questions, there ought to be a distinction made between cases of insanity of the passions and of partial insanity of the intellectual powers, and cases of delirium or total insanity. In the last, there is evidently no accountability. In the former instances, a judgment should be formed from the circumstances of the particular case under consideration.

Accordingly this may be laid down as a general rule in respect to this subject, and perhaps it is the only one, which can be; viz. Persons of an alienated mind, whether they be idiots or insane, are not to be considered accountable, are not subjects of praise or blame, whenever it appears, that the mental alienation extends to, and annuls the power of judging. And this is the case with all persons, who are the subjects of total insanity.—When the insanity is partial, it would seem to follow, therefore, that the first inquiry should be, whether the action committed comes within the range of the malady. For a person, who is insane on one subject merely, will probably be found to labour under a perversion of judgment in respect to that particular subject, no less than if the insanity were total or delirious. Consequently, a distinction may be justly set up, although it will require much caution in doing it, between those actions, which can be clearly found within the limits of the person's insanity, and those, which evidently fall without it.

## § 466. Of the imputation of insanity to individuals.

While the existence of insanity, so far as materially to affect the power of judging, takes away accountability in whole or in part, it affects proportionally the relations, which the subjects of it sustain to society. In all well organized communities it will be found to follow from the terms of the civil compact, that those, who exercise some

reignty, are bound to afford protection to the citizens in general, and to individuals in particular, in certain cases. Hence they will be found to have taken precautionary measures, the nature of which all are acquainted with, to protect the community against the injuries, which insane persons might commit, and also to alleviate that unhappiness, which they necessarily bring, in a greater or less degree, on themselves and families.

Accordingly it is implied in the imputation of insanity to individuals, by an act of the civil authorities, that the insane person is deprived of that ability of self government, which is the common allotment of men ; that the strong bonds of friendship, of family, and of country, which once kept him in his appropriate station in society, are loosened ; and that he must find, in the substitution of the will and guardianship of the State, that oversight and protection, which he has lost by the alienation of his own. While all must admit the propriety of this course, where the circumstances of the case justly demand it, it must be conceded, that nothing can be more solemn and affecting, than such a public imputation of derangement, which, whether just or unjust, practically annihilates the civil and social character of man, and seals his degradation in these respects. It is a right, therefore, which ought not to be exercised but upon good ground, and the exercise of which ought to be understood to require, and to imply a correct acquaintance with this difficult, but practical and important subject. And the more so, because there have been depraved individuals, who have endeavoured to fasten the charge of insanity upon others from some interested motives, in order to gratify malignant passions, or to control their persons, or property. A suitable protection against the designs of such is to be had, not merely in the integrity of those, who are to judge in these cases, but in their acquaintance with the laws and tendencies of the mind.

Before leaving this topic, one suggestion further remains. In forming an opinion as to the condition of an individual, not only those particu-

be considered, which are supposed to indicate insanity, but they are to be estimated, in connection with constitutional traits of character. That rapidity of association, that gay and heedless transition from subject to subject, which is natural in one, and occasions no surprise, would be regarded in another, as a positive indication of the disturbance of the mental powers.

§. 467. Of the treatment of the insane.

In closing this view of mental maladies, it is proper to make some suggestions on the treatment due to those of our fellow beings, who are thus afflicted. It is no uncommon thing to see them treated with unkindness. Although they may not, in general, so readily perceive and so intensely feel, as others, the injuries they receive, any cruelty of treatment towards them is very unjustifiable in the authors of it.

It is wrong on the general principle, that we are bound, not to cause and increase suffering unnecessarily in any case whatever, even in the animal creation. The poet Cowper uttered the sentiment of all kind and honourable men, when he declared, he would not reckon in his list of friends the man, who should needlessly set foot upon a worm.

It is wrong also, on the principle, that we should do to others, as we ourselves wish to be done by.—The person of an alienated mind may not be able to reason on the subject of what is due to him, but those, who possess rational powers, can. They cannot fail to see the application of the Scriptural principle, which has been mentioned, in the present instance. All persons whatever are subject to these mental evils ; and it is presumed, that no one would be easy in the anticipation of being left without care and assistance from others, when he should be unable to take care of himself. If, therefore, we take the ground, that persons in the state of idiocy, or of delirium, or of any of the forms of mental alienation, are not entitled to care and kindness, we are possibly treasuring up for ourselves a retribution of a similar fearful character.

Again ; ill treatment of cases of this kind is a tacit reflection on the Supreme Being, which we cannot, without great self-ignorance, imagine ourselves authorized to make. He has in his wisdom permitted them to exist, as memorials of human weakness, and as useful commentaries on pride of intellect ; and perhaps also to give us an opportunity of exercising the noble virtues of charity and humanity. We are, therefore, bound to receive the instructions they impart, and to exercise the virtues, which they give us an opportunity of exercising ; otherwise, we cast contempt on Him, whose almighty hand orders the distinctions, and distributes the allotments both of bodily and of intellectual life.

NOTE.—The subject of insanity in its various forms is so intimately connected with human happiness, that it could not fail very early to arrest attention. Medical writers in particular had abundant occasion to notice the causes and circumstances of its developement. A numerous catalogue of them have made it the subject of their remarks. And while it was their prominent object to prevent or to alleviate one of the sorest maladies, which it is the lot of human nature to suffer, they have indirectly thrown light on the whole field of the philosophy of the mind.

Where so many have written, it would be some labour to make out a full list, and a weightier and more responsible task, to discriminate their respective merits. Without, therefore, presuming to undertake it, we merely embrace this opportunity to mention among others, as writings that may be read with advantage, M. Pinel's Treatise on Insanity, Rush on the Diseases of the Mind, and the articles on the subject of mental alienation in the *DICTIONNAIRE DES SCIENCES MEDICALES*. There is in these writings an aptness of illustration, a philanthropic eloquence, a spirit of philosophy, which can hardly fail to interest and instruct.

## CHAPTER THIRTY NINTH.

### ORIGIN OF PREJUDICES.

§. 468. Of the meaning of prejudices.

**I**N forming our judgments or opinions of things, we are led to take into consideration a variety of facts and circumstances, which are applicable to the particular subjects under consideration, and are fitted to influence the mind in the formation of such opinions. The circumstances and facts, which are thus fitted to influence our belief, in consequence of giving new views in respect to the subjects before us, are commonly termed **EVIDENCE**.

**PREJUDICES**, to which we are now to attend, are judgments or opinions, which are formed without a suitable regard to the evidence, properly pertaining to them. Whenever, for example, sources of evidence, which are within our reach, are overlooked; or when the facts and incidental circumstances, constituting the evidence, are allowed to have too great, or too little influence. A mind, which discovers a tendency thus to overlook or misapply grounds of evidence, is called a prejudiced mind.

A greater or less degree of importance will be attached to this subject, according as we attach a greater or less degree of value to the possession of correct and enlightened opinions. None can consider it unimportant; many will justly regard it, as of the very highest importance. It is the object of this chapter to point out some of the principal sources of prejudices.

§. 469. Of constitutional prejudices.

The formation of opinions without a suitable regard to the evidence may sometimes be attributed to something in the constitution, to some original weakness or obliquity in the mental character ; as in the following instances.

Some person's minds appear to be limited in their range ; they are incapable of taking in, and retaining, and comparing a number of propositions at once. Inasmuch, therefore, as they are incapable of doing this, and must, consequently, let many facts and incidents go without proper examination, they are led to adopt and cherish opinions on other grounds, than a suitable regard to the evidence. Such opinions, although those, who maintain them, may be thought to be less culpable than many others, are rightly considered prejudices.——Another class are those, who are naturally too credulous ; who are ready to receive every thing for truth, which has even the slightest degree of evidence in its favour. It seems to be altogether impossible to induce them to pause, to examine, to compare, to reflect. They readily believe whatever they read, or hear asserted, until they find it contradicted ; and then they adopt some other opinion as readily and on as slight ground, as they adopted the first, which they retain no longer than they are met with, and driven about by the next wind of doctrine.——Other persons are of a temper nearly the reverse ; they are naturally obstinate, and contentious, and are unwilling to receive any thing, that is proposed for their belief, however reasonable it may be. Consequently their opinions, so far as they are the opposite of those, which have a higher degree of evidence in their favour, are prejudices. And this is the case with very many of them.——Erroneous opinions of this kind, which can be traced back to some peculiarity originally inherent in the mind, may be termed constitutional prejudices. When such constitutional defects are excessive, and disqualify the subjects of them for the ordinary concerns of life, they are considered as coming within a class of the multiplied forms of mental alienation. (150.)

## §. 470. Of prejudices in favour of our youth.

Many of those opinions, which we form of the scenes, and events, and characters of our youthful days, are prejudices. As we look back and frame an estimation of that early period, the associates of our childhood and youth seem to us to have been without a crime : the interests of parents were never at variance with those of their children ; masters sought the good of their dependants : the poor were fed ; magistrates were virtuous : the religious teachers were eminently holy men. Alas, for these evil days of our manhood and old age, in which there is such rottenness in all civil institutions, that have been changed : such corruption in every new set of magistrates ; and such depravity in the great mass of the people ! The causes of this apparent disparity between the world, as it exists now, and formerly, are briefly these.—In the morning of life every thing is new ; our attention is arrested by a multitude of novel objects, and the mind is filled with delight. Happy ourselves we imagine, that, with few exceptions, all others are not less so ; and while our own hearts are conscious of innocence, we are exempt from any suspicion of crime in others. In a word, we suppose all the world to be happy, all the world to be innocent and just, because we are conscious of the existence of rectitude and truth and innocence in ourselves, and are too inexperienced to be aware of the frequency of their absence from the great mass of mankind. As we grow up, cares multiply, bodily infirmities increase ; we more often see collisions of interest, hollow professions, deceptive expedients, and intriguing arts of all kinds ; and what is worse, we discover in our own breasts more of distrust, jealousy, passion, and other evils, than had been developed in our earlier days.

The true solution then is this ; We attribute to one thing what belongs to another. We ascribe to the great mass of mankind changes, which have only taken place in ourselves.—The world appears to us differently from what it did when we were young, not because it has itself essentially altered, which can never be supposed to have happened in a single life of man ; but because we,

individuals, have become more acquainted with its true character, and are made more sensibly to feel the pressure of its many ills.

It has been by means of this prejudice in favour of our youth, that a permanency has often been communicated to political institutions, to which they were not entitled by their intrinsic merits. It has often excited surprise in the historian, that forms of government, which were unjust in their operation, expensive, and every way defective, have been sustained without a murmur, and even loved and venerated by those, who have chiefly experienced their evil results. It is the same government, (and if it be a monarchy, the same administrators of it, or their lineal descendants,) which existed, when they were young. They then loved it, because they neither understood, nor felt its defects, and because at that period every thing was new, and interesting, and lovely. The attachments then formed continue, at least till manhood; and then it is too late with the greater part of mankind to throw off old affections, and to form the mind to the love of a new and better order of things. And thus, in consequence of the mental blindness, superinduced by prejudices of this sort, errors are perpetuated, gross abuses are too patiently borne, and each generation entails an inheritance of wretchedness on the succeeding.

§. 471. Of prejudices of home and country.

There are prejudices in favour of one's native country and of the village, where he may happen to have been brought up, and to live. And this prejudice in favour of one's own residence and nation is too often attended with a contempt and dislike of those, who have their origin elsewhere. It is notorious, that two of the most powerful and well informed nations on earth, the French and English, have for a long series of years affected to despise, and have most certainly hated each other. The French and Spaniards, who also are near neighbours to each other, have hardly been on better terms. The Italians, by the eminent success of some of their countrymen, he



arts, term the Germans blockheads ; while the Germans get their satisfaction by bestowing the same appellation on the Swiss. Even the poor and ignorant Greenlander has his grounds of triumph ; and amid his rocks and snows fondly imagines, that there is no home, no freedom like his.

Different explanations may be given of the origin of this strong attachment to our nation and the place of our residence, and of the contempt, which is often entertained for others. Whatever explanation may be adopted, the existence of such feelings is well known, and their influence in perplexing our judgments of men and things extensively felt. This is seen in the criticisms, which are made by the authors of one nation on the productions in literature and the arts of another. With the Englishman, Montesquieu is superficial and dull ; with the Frenchman, Newton dwindles down to a mere almanack-maker ; in one country a writer is extolled on account of the place of his birth, and in another is decried and put down for the same reason.—It is important to all to be aware of the tendency to form erroneous opinions in consequence of these predilections and antipathies. A mind well balanced, and anxious to know the truth and to do equal and exact justice to all, will carefully guard against it.

#### §. 472. Professional prejudices.

Some erroneous opinions may be attributed to men's professions or callings in life. A little self-examination will convince us, that our feelings are apt to be unduly enlisted in favour of those, who are practising the same arts, pursuing the same studies, engaged in the same calling of whatever kind. When at any time it falls to us to discriminate between such, and persons of another art or calling ; to determine which has the greatest merit, or is the deepest in crime, there is no small difficulty in becoming entirely divested of this feeling. It continually rises up, even when we seem to be unconscious of it ; it gives a new aspect to the facts, which come under examination ; it secretly but almost infallibly perplexes the decisions.

we the reputation of candour, and who, by  
 action of intended injustice.

The causes of prejudices, arising from particular professions in life, are undoubtedly much the same, as those which are at the bottom of the partial sentiments, which people entertain of their own home and country. There is something in our constitution, which leads us to feel a deep interest in those, with whom we are much associated, whose toils are the same, who have the same hope to stimulate, and the same opposition to encounter. Besides, our own selfish feelings are at work. Our honour, and consequently, our respectability are in some degree involved in that of the profession. As that rises or falls, individuals experience something of the elevation or depression.

Under this class of prejudices may be reckoned those, resulting from that contraction and halting of the mind, which is often superinduced by an exclusive attention to one class of subjects, or to one train of thought. When a man, who has been taught in one science only, and whose mental operations have consequently been always running in one track, ventures out of it, and attempts to judge on other subjects, nothing is more common than for such an one to judge wrong. It is no easy matter for him to seize on the true distinctions of things beyond his particular sphere of knowledge; and he mistakes not only in respect to the nature of the things themselves, of which he is to judge, but also as to the nature and rules of the evidence applicable to them.—An eminent mathematician is said to have attempted to ascertain by calculation the ratio, in which the evidence of facts must decrease in the course of time, and to have fixed the period, when the evidence of the facts, on which Christianity is founded, shall become extinct, and when, in consequence, all religious faith must be banished from the earth.

§. 473. Prejudices of sects and parties.

In religious sects, and in political or other parties, prejudices are still stronger, than those of particular arts and professions. In sects and parties there is a ~~great~~ of opinions, and not of trades; a rivalry of principles and

not of mere labour and merchandize. It is, therefore, an active, an aspiring competition. Too restless to lie dormant, it is introduced in high-ways, and workshops, and private and public assemblies; too ambitious to be easily overcome, it continually renews and perpetuates the conflict. The prejudices, therefore, of sects and parties have all the elements of professional prejudices, embittered by constant exercise. They convulse nations; they disturb the peace of neighbourhoods; they break asunder the strong ties of family and kindred.

The history of every republic, not excepting our own, affords abundant instances of the putting forth of these virulent and ungenerous tendencies. We do not mean to say, that a man cannot belong to a party without being prejudiced; however difficult it may be, to be placed in that situation without being tinctured with those feelings. But wherever they actually exist, they deaden every honourable sentiment; they perplex every noble principle. Nothing can be clearer evidence of this, than that we continually behold men of exalted patriotism, and of every way unsullied character, traduced by unfounded imputations and charges; and which are known to be so by those political opponents, who make them. And it is a still more striking illustration of the strength of party prejudices, that we find the political measures, advocated or opposed by the same men, as they happen to be in or out of office; or as the measures in question happen to be advocated or opposed by the members of the other party. As if men, and not measures; as if places, without regard to principles, were to be the sole subject of inquiry.

The prejudices of sects have been no less violent than those of political parties, as may be learnt from the hostility, which is yet exercised among them, and from the history of former persecutions and martyrdoms. Even philosophy has not been exempt; different scientific systems have had their parties for and against; and the serious and dignified pretensions of philosophic inquiry have not always preserved them from virulent contentions, which were not merely discreditable to science.

but to human nature. We are told in the histories of philosophical opinions, that the controversies between the Realists and Nominalists ran so high, as to end not only in verbal disputes, but in blows. An eye-witness assures us, that the combatants might be seen, not only engaging with fists, but with clubs and swords, and that many were wounded, and some killed. Not a very suitable way, one would imagine, of deciding an abstract, metaphysical question.

§. 474. Prejudices of authority.

Men often adopt erroneous opinions merely because they are proposed by writers of great name. The writings of Aristotle were upheld as chief authorities for a number of centuries in Europe, and no more was necessary in support of any controverted opinions, than to cite something favourable from them. The followers of Des Cartes received hardly less implicitly the philosophical creed of that new master of science ; not so much because they had investigated, and were convinced in view of the evidence before them, as because Des Cartes had said it. There have been teachers in religion, also in politics and other subordinate departments of science, who have had their followers for no better reason. Such prejudices have been a great hindrance to free discussion and the progress of knowledge.

The influence of authority in giving a direction to people's opinions is not limited to persons, who can truly make pretensions to some superior wisdom ; it is also frequently exercised by mere riches, titles, outward splendour. This is often seen in republican states, where the people have the right of choosing their rulers, and of expressing their opinions on a variety of public questions. It is well, if not more than half of the people in any of the smaller corporations do not, in giving their suffrages, fall in with the sentiments, however absurd, of a few individuals, whose riches enable them to make a somewhat greater figure than their poorer neighbours. But this is a very unreasonable prejudice. The poorer classes of the community, inasmuch as they have but a small amount of property to boast

of, ought at least to show in all cases, where they are at all capable of judging, that they have understandings, and possess and value freedom.

§. 475. Prejudices of careless and indiscriminate reading.

It has been remarked by men of careful observation, that those, who apply themselves most eagerly to reading, and do not combine with this practice a very considerable degree of caution and discrimination, are often led into a great number of errors. As they never pretend to examine and to weigh subjects carefully, their minds can be justly thought to be no better than a mere bundle of prejudices, although they may be of a less tenacious kind, than those arising from other sources. If their author happens to be in an error, which is very probable, as they take little or no pains in the selection of books, they have no way of avoiding it. Their only remedy is continual reading, which increases the evil; like travellers, gotten into a wrong road, who are less likely to arrive at the place of their destination, the further they advance.

Although many ideas are to be derived from books, and it would be no less unwise than unprofitable to throw them aside, they are not to be consulted to the neglect of our own invention and of that effort, without which there cannot be a well furnished, and well disciplined mind. It is easier to read than to meditate; and he, who reads merely or chiefly because he has an aversion to thinking, may be a book-worm, and even be thought to be learned, and yet be far from reaping the full benefit, which he might receive from his intellectual powers.

§. 476. Prejudices of presumption.

It must be admitted, that there is a difference in men's understandings, that some, where the education has been the same, appear to have naturally greater intellectual parts, than others. Those, who are thus originally favoured above their competitors, are too apt to presume on such superiority, and to trust to their genius, where care, & ~~we~~ would be much better auxiliaries

Such men, who imagine, that their minds will not only be furnished with spontaneous materials, but regulated by a spontaneous and infallible discipline, may impose upon the ignorant, but they make but a poor figure in the presence of learned and discerning persons. They will perhaps be found to have ideas enough, but there will be less prospect of their being suitably defined, compared together, and adjusted. We could not expect this with any better reason, than we can anticipate, that stones and timber, the spontaneous products of nature, will of themselves, without labour and art, be arranged together into well constructed and convenient piles of buildings.

§. 477. Prejudices of enthusiasm.

ENTHUSIASM always implies some object, which the mind judges good and desirable, but the pursuit of which is attended with a strong excitement of the feelings. In genuine enthusiasm the ardent feeling, which is exercised towards the object of pursuit, is supposed to be excited by that object exclusively, and to be free from any mixture of selfishness. So that this trait is in general an exalted and noble one, although sometimes attended with effects, which it is necessary to guard against. There may be enthusiasm in literature, politics, religion, the arts, war, &c.

Persons under the influence of enthusiasm are subject to prejudices; that is, they form opinions without a cautious and suitable examination of all those facts and circumstances, which properly pertain to them. They are urged forward by too violent an impulse to permit them to stop and to analyze; many objections, which come in their way, are overlooked or disregarded; while every thing, that is favourable to the objects before them, is made to assume an exaggerated importance. The glow of feeling, the impetuosity of the passions is made to take the place of cool and well-founded decisions.—The scenes of the French Revolution illustrate the prejudices of enthusiasm. The object, which the principal actors had in view—the establishment of freedom in France, was a good hurried away by an excessive zeal, they magnified

quake was experienced, which was attended with very considerable injury to many large towns, and with the destruction of nearly twenty thousand persons. As this calamity happened on the day and hour of a great religious festival, it was interpreted by those, who were not favourably disposed towards the existing order of things, into a divine judgment, a manifestation of the displeasure of the Almighty at the wickedness of the people in attempting to secure their liberty. This idea was readily seized by the mass of the inhabitants, who were at that time ignorant and credulous. They joined in great numbers the Spanish army, that was acting against the republic; the patriots became discouraged; and after being defeated in a number of battles, Venezuela was again brought under its ancient masters. This disastrous result was owing to the prejudices of superstition.

§. 480. Of superstition in times of distress and danger.

The fact above-mentioned leads us to observe, that in all times of distress and danger the creations of a superstitious mind are greatly multiplied. Fear is one of the appropriate elements of such a mind; and when difficulties and dangers thicken around it, nothing can surpass the degree of its excitement. Under the influence of the excitement of such dark periods, it notices many things, which at other times would not have attracted attention. A violent thunderstorm, which in times of tranquillity and peace, would have been unnoticed, has an ominous significance in periods of revolutions and wars. The flight of birds, the blowing of the winds, the rise and fall of the tides, the motion of the clouds, the darting of meteors, any of the commonest natural appearances arrest and fill with astonishment the minds of the superstitious at such seasons.

§. 481. Prejudices of personal friendships and dislikes.

If man were to choose a state of apathy and indifference, he would be unable to obtain it, at least permanently; it would be refused to him by the very elements, the original laws of his nature. He is destined not only to

act, but to feel; and his feelings in respect to others will vary, according as he has been more or less in their company, as he has received from them greater or less favours or injuries. Hence he has his sympathies and his dislikes, his favourable and unfavourable sentiments, his friends and his opposers. And here we have another source of prejudices. It is so well understood as to have become a common saying, that it is a difficult matter to judge, with perfect impartiality, either of friends or foes. A question arises, we will suppose, concerning the merit or demerit, the right or wrong in the conduct of a friend; of one, in whose favour our sympathies are strongly enlisted. In the deliberation upon the facts before us, which we attempt to hold, the mind is continually interrupted by the remembrance of those kind acts and excellent qualities, which have laid the foundation of our favourable partialities. They come before the eye of the judgment; we attempt to remove them, and they return again; they interrupt and cloud the clearness of its perceptions. And, hence, our judgments prove to be wrong.

We experience the same difficulty in forming a just estimate of the character and conduct of those, for whom we entertain a personal dislike.—There is a continual suggestion of acts and of qualities, which are the foundations of that dislike. The effect of this is partly to divert the mind from the question properly before it, and partly to diffuse over it a misrepresentation, which has its origin solely in our own feelings of antipathy. Our dislike interposes itself, as in the other case, between the thing to be judged of, and the susceptibility of judging, and renders the mind unable to perceive so clearly the true merits of the question, as it otherwise would.

And here it may be further remarked, in connection with these views, that sympathy for sorrow, that the feeling of compassion for persons in distress has a tendency to perplex the judgment. It is true, that the perplexity and error of judgment in such cases is an amiable prejudice; but it is not less a prejudice. How often people undertake the defence and justification of those, who are unf



fortunate and distressed, merely from feelings of sympathy ! Afterwards when their cooler reason is permitted to decide, they learn to their mortification, that the subjects of those chivalrous feelings and partial judgments were altogether unworthy of such unreflecting kindness.

§. 482. Prejudices of custom or fashion.

The practices of different nations, and the prevailing notions in respect to them, differ from each other ; nor are those of the same nation the same at different periods.—The modes of salutation in France are different from those of Russia ; and those of both nations are different from the forms, which are commonly received in Oriental countries. There is no less diversity among nations in the fashions of dress, than in the methods of civility, and of polite intercourse. The dress of a Turk or of a Chinese would make but an ill figure on an Englishman ; and the Englishman himself would reject with contempt the obsolete and neglected fashions of his own ancestors.—The authority of fashion extends also to political and religious ceremonies, to the regulation and management of domestic affairs, and to methods of education. No two nations are alike in all these respects ; and hardly one age, or one year agrees with another.

We find in the authority of fashion or custom a fruitful source of limited and erroneous judgments. Each nation passes its censure on the customs, that prevail abroad, but are not adopted at home ; each age ridicules the practices of a preceding age, that have since become obsolete. We have great reason for considering these limited and premature judgments prejudices. We see no grounds, why one nation, especially where there is nearly an equal degree of mental improvement, should set itself up as an infallible judge of propriety and impropriety in the customs and ceremonies of another nation.—But the fallacy consists not merely in ignorantly censuring others. The great body of people are found to be not more unanimous in censuring the opinions and fashions of other ages and nations, than they are, in blindly and implicitly adopting

## ORIGIN OF PREJUDICES.

those of their own, however trivial or absurd they may. They do, as they see others do; this method they have followed from their youth up, without exercising their own judgment; and in this way custom has become to them a 'second nature.'

Some respect is due undoubtedly to the sentiments of the great mass of people around us, although these sentiments are acknowledged to be prejudiced. A sudden and indiscriminate breaking off from all their practices is not to be recommended. But then a greater respect is due to truth, justice, and conscience; something may be sacrificed to the weaknesses of human nature, but more must be given up to its nobler elements.

### §. 483. Correctives of fashionable prejudices.

"Three things, (says Watts,) are to be considered, in order to deliver our understandings from this danger and slavery.

1. That the greatest part of the civil customs of any particular nation or age spring from humour rather than reason. Sometimes the humour of the prince prevails, and sometimes the humour of the people. It is either the great or the many, who dictate the fashion, and these have not always the highest reason on their side.

2. Consider also, that the customs of the same nations in different ages, the customs of different nations in the same age, and the customs of different towns and villages in the same nation, are very various and contrary to each other. The fashionable learning, language, sentiments, and rules of politeness, differ greatly in different countries and ages of mankind; but truth and reason are of a more uniform and steady nature, and do not change with the fashion. Upon this account, to cure the prepossessions which arise from custom, it is of excellent use to travel and see the customs of various countries, and to read the travels of other men, and the history of past ages, that every thing may not seem strange and uncouth, which is not practised within the limits of our own parish, or in the narrow space of our own life-time.

3. Consider yet again, how often we ourselves have changed our opinions concerning the decency, propriety, or congruity of several modes or practices in the world, especially if we have lived to the age of thirty or forty. Custom or fashion, even in all its changes, has been ready to have some degree of ascendancy over our understandings, and what at one time seemed decent, appears obsolete and disagreeable afterward, when the fashion changes. Let us learn, therefore, to abstract as much as possible from custom and fashion, when we would pass a judgment concerning the real value and intrinsic nature of things."

§. 484. Prejudices of mental indolence.

The catalogue of prejudices may be yet further increased ; it would be no easy matter to give a perfect enumeration of them.—Men often take up with erroneous sentiments, and expose themselves and others to all the ill effects of such wrong opinions, rather than submit to the mere labour of a thorough examination of them. These are prejudices of MENTAL INDOLENCE.

The mind, in the early part of life, exhibits much activity ; every thing, that is novel, arrests its attention ; and at that period all objects possess something of that character. After the fervour of youth has passed, this activity generally ceases ; the soul, no longer stimulated by the excitement of novelty, seeks repose. To doubt leads to inquiry ; inquiry is laborious, and, therefore, painful ; and the resolution is, consequently, taken to harbour no doubts, to ask no questions.

This resolution, so fatal to the progress of the truth and to all right views, is sometimes taken for another reason. Inquiry, and the suggestion of doubts on all long established opinions are extremely distressing to those, who have not been in the habit of careful and exact investigation ; and who have, therefore, no well settled and satisfactory views as to the powers of the mind, and the nature and degrees of evidence. To tear them from their ancient opinions is like the separation of old friends. It is in

itself exceedingly trying; but there is a distress more poignant than that of the present moment, in the vacillation, the tossing to and fro of the mind, which for a long time succeeds.—Men have been frequently induced by the experience of this unpleasant state of mind, which results from their previous neglect to examine and to form opinions with care, to give up inquiry altogether. They become unwilling to have their mental slumbers disturbed; preferring a quiet adherence to their long adopted belief, however erroneous it may be, to the endurance of the perplexing uneasiness of that state of scepticism, which intervenes between the rejection of old opinions and the formation of new.

§. 485. Of the methods of subduing the prejudices of others.

It is no easy task fully to remove the prejudices, with which in our intercourse in the world we shall have to contend; especially where they have been of long standing. But in some cases we cannot decline attempting it, without evidently neglecting a duty, owed to a fellow-being as well as to ourselves. In the discharge of this difficult, but important duty, the following directions will not be without use.

(1) In attempting to subdue the prejudices of others, scrupulous regard is to be had to their feelings.—It is implied in the very attempt to subdue a prejudice, that the views in respect to that particular subject, which we ourselves entertain, have the greater degree of correctness; but even this implied superiority is not unnecessarily to be obtruded on the prejudiced man's attention, but rather to be kept out of sight. The poorest man has his measures of self-love, the most ignorant and prejudiced man has his pride of intellect; and if that self-love or that pride of intellect be offended, in vain will be all attempts at a removal of their erroneous notions. So that a regard to the feelings and even the weaknesses of those, whose opinions we controvert, is due not more to the general humanity, than to the success of the particular in hand.

(2) Having by all suitable means conciliated the prejudiced man's feelings, the wrong sentiments, which he cherishes, may be attacked by direct argument. They may be shown to be ill founded by reasoning, conclusively deduced from propositions so plain and just, as to be admitted by both parties. This perhaps will answer the purpose, where the prejudices have not been of very long continuance, and have not acquired a great degree of strength.

(3) Where they are found to be very tenacious, another course is thought to be preferable. Let no direct attack be made upon the prejudice, which is to be opposed, but let it pass with as little immediate notice, as possible. Efforts should be made, in the mean while, to instruct the individual in those acknowledged truths, which have a distant, but a sure connection with his false opinions. In this way his mind will be furnished with a mixture of truth and error, instead of error alone; hereafter the discordant elements will be carrying on a conflict of themselves; and his prejudices will certainly be weakened by this inward contest, and probably overthrown.

NOTE. Many writers have examined the subject of prejudices. A number of valuable remarks on this topic are found in Malebranche's *Search after Truth*. Lord Bacon, to whom the sciences are so much indebted, deemed the subject of prejudices deserving a place in the *Novum Organum*, where he has examined them under the designation of *IDOLA*. Dr. Watts in his book of *Logic* has devoted to it a valuable chapter, and has also made some remarks on it in his *Improvement of the Mind*. It has recently received new illustrations and embellishments from an article in the *New Edinburgh Encyclopædia* by M. Simonde de Sismondi.

## CHAPTER FORTIETH.

### EDUCATION.

§. 486. Of the meaning and earliest sources of education.

**BY** EDUCATION we understand all the various methods, by which the mind is furnished with knowledge and its intellectual and moral susceptibilities gradually developed and improved. EDUCATION, therefore, includes those means, by which knowledge is communicated in infancy and childhood; the influence of the examples, which are set by parents and others; the moral and religious principles, which are instilled either by books, or by conversation; instruction in the arts, sciences, and literature. As the process of intellectual culture commences with the very beginnings of existence, Nature has very kindly and providently taken care of it at an earlier period, than can be commenced by man.

The infant no sooner comes into the world, than its mind expands itself for the reception of knowledge as naturally as its delighted eye opens to the beams of the sun. It begins to receive ideas by means of the senses; having no other effectual medium of instruction, than what is immediately furnished by the Author of its existence. The earnestness, which it discovers, as it turns its eye towards the light or any bright object, its expression of surprise on hearing sudden and loud sounds, show, that the work of intellectual developement is begun. Not one of the senses without a share in this work; multitudes of new objects, operating upon all of them, become sources of knowledge;

hardly at any time, except in the hours of sleep, leaving the mind without occupation. The actions and words of its attendants soon begin to be noticed and imitated; even its sufferings become auxiliary in the great process of furnishing the soul with new notions, and of unfolding its untried capacities.——So that probably in the very first years of its life, there has been a gradual increase of knowledge, as great, when we consider that the mind was at first without ideas, as at any subsequent period.

§. 487. Of the introduction of imaginary and false ideas.

While the young mind, by the mere aid of that instrumentality, which the author of nature has furnished, is continually storing up important thoughts, it also receives false ideas from various sources. These erroneous intimations are not necessarily to be attributed to the imperfection of the senses, or to any thing originally in the constitution; for the child is now supposed to be arrived at that period, when the suggestions of nature may be aided, or counteracted, or misrepresented by parents and domestics.

In saying, that false notions may be introduced, we allude to the opinions, which children are led to entertain, of the existence of ghosts, spectres, or other imaginary beings. There is no want of true and important notions, which can be made an excuse for the introduction of such absurd ideas; and it ought to be made a great object to keep the mind as free from them as possible.

The greater heed is to be given to this direction, because permanently evil consequences are found to result from the neglect of it. The introduction of ideas of ghosts, &c. in early life ever afterwards renders one incapable of enduring darkness or solitude with any tolerable degree of comfort.——Attention should be given, in the early periods of infancy and childhood, to the developement of the passions. Those, which are vicious, should be checked and subdued, which can be done much more easily at that time, than afterwards. Virtuous and noble affections should be inbred; such as gratitude to parents, benevolence to mankind, and love for the truth.

## §. 488. Of guarding against prejudices in general.

A superstitious belief in the agency of spiritual beings in the dark, which is early received, is only one of the many false notions, with which the mind is then liable to be impressed, by means of a wrong intellectual culture. The whole host of errors, which were mentioned in the chapter on Prejudices, may have their origin at the same time; even errors of a moral, political, and religious nature. It is difficult to assign a period, when the mind is too young and powerless to receive some faint notions on these subjects. Individuals can sometimes state, as far back as their memory can reach, circumstances, (perhaps an accidental remark, perhaps an unimportant religious ceremony,) which have had a permanent influence.

Prejudices so numerous and tenacious are introduced into the mind in childhood, that it requires much pains and time in after life to unlearn the false notions, to which we have been accustomed to render an implicit belief. The struggle against the influence, which they have acquired over us, will be found to be a severe one; and oftentimes it is quite unsuccessful. Many persons, who have been fully aware of the extent and evil nature of the tendencies, which were given to their minds in early life, have desired to counteract and annul their influence, and have made efforts to that purpose, but without effect. The seeds, that were sown in the nursery, and had borne their fruits in youth, had taken too deep root to be eradicated in the fullness of years.—We conclude, therefore, that it is a part of all right education, and the duty of all, who are engaged in instructing young minds, scrupulously to guard against the admission of any thing other than the truth.

## §. 489. Of an uniform developement of the mental powers.

It is a great object, to render the mind comprehensive, and liberal. This object is necessarily defeated, when there is an exclusive attention to one, or even more of our intellectual susceptibilities, to the neglect of others. Consequently, such a degree of culture seems very properly to be bestowed upon all of them, as will secure to them a good



share of strength and activity.—Some persons possess imagination in a high degree, and the ‘eye in a fine phrenzy rolling;’ but the vigour of the reasoning faculty is entirely demolished. They can picture in their imaginations, no less vividly than the writer himself, the scenes of love and war in their favourite romances; but cannot grasp consecutive propositions, and feel the force of an argument. Others are mere reasoners without taste; having the power to follow out and fully subdue the difficulties of a demonstration, but without a soul to feel the touches of sentiment, or an ear for the harmonies of poetry.

We cannot help regarding such an education, which improves some of the intellectual powers, while others are greatly neglected, as erroneous and defective. It tends to defeat the great purpose of life, which is not to establish a superiority in a few individuals over the rest of mankind, but to render all qualified to fulfil, in the best manner possible, the duties of men, of citizens, of members of families, and above all of Christians.

§. 490. Of diversities in genius and temper.

Striking differences are sometimes discernible in the temper and genius of youth. It is not always easy to say what they may be owing to, whether to something original in the mental organization, or to some accidental circumstances, nor is it of great importance. In the process of education these differences should be regarded, and a preference should be given to those parts of study, for which the mind appears to have a natural inclination.—Not only individuals have mental characteristics, which distinguish them from other individuals; there are also hereditary traits in families, which go down from generation to generation. The members of one family successively discover a fondness for abstract speculation, for all studies, which require the closest application of the reasoning powers; while the successive members of another are distinguished for vivacity, wit, imagination.—But while some reference ought to be had, in the course of an education, to these circumstances, and a preference should be given,

in the selection of pursuits, to such personal and hereditary inclinations, there should be the greater caution in seeing that other pursuits, to which there is supposed to be a natural aversion, be not wholly neglected. The man of imagination is not to leave his reasoning powers to neglect; nor should the lover of mathematics forego those methods of intellectual culture, by which the taste may be quickened and improved. An exclusive attention to a particular pursuit, even when it seems to be warranted by the high claims of genius, would be inconsistent with that developement and exercise of all the intellectual powers, which we conceive to be implied in a perfect education.

§. 491. Of moral and religious education.

It ought not to be forgotten in the early periods of education, that man is a moral being, and that he is, even in the commencement of life, susceptible of instruction in the distinctions of right and wrong. The doctrine, which Rousseau and others have studiously advanced, that childhood and youth are incapable of receiving moral and religious ideas, has provoked an indignant and triumphant opposition. It is both unsound in point of fact, and most pernicious in its tendency. All experience goes against it.

In France, where it has found its most numerous advocates, its evil results have been very deeply felt. A recent French writer, who cannot be suspected of giving unfavourable representations of his countrymen without a cause, thinks, that the widely spread domestic corruption and miseries, which he acknowledges to exist, can be corrected only by a greater attention to early moral education. This remark implies, that the origin of those evils is to be found in the neglect of such education.

As a first great principle in morals and religion, let the minds of the young be taught, that there is a God. It is true, they will not understand his nature; but does any one understand it? Can the most mature and enlightened mind explain the mysteries of the Supreme Being? But even children may have notions of God, which approach

more nearly to truth than we are aware, although we are unable to say precisely how far. Let the existence, therefore, of the Supreme Being be carefully inculcated from the first moment, when access can be had to the mind. Let it be associated with the rising and setting of the sun; with woods and waters; with that starry sky, which elevated the devotions of the Psalmist; with all the appearances of nature.—When the young have become impressed with this idea, the natural consequence will be, that they will feel themselves under control and government, when absent from parents, guardians, and instructors. They believe, they remember, that there is a Being every where present; and this belief will be found to operate as a powerful restraint on evil propensities and actions.

Having begun with the idea of a God, children should next be instructed, as soon as they are able to read, in certain portions of the Bible, that great system of duty, submission, and hope. It is no serious objection, if they do not fully understand the import of every passage, which is read, or committed to memory. Something will be understood, which will be valuable in the end; and the more so, because it will be associated with all the delightful recollections of early days. It is this part of education, which most effectually promotes individual happiness, making life comfortable amid all its roughnesses and trials; which maintains peace in families, and affords security to the commonwealth. In general, no length of time, no change of circumstances wholly destroys its propitious influence. And without it, without a belief in the existence of God, and a high sense of accountability, all sciences will be in vain; all other attainments will utterly fail of making men happy, and widely useful.

Multitudes of illustrations might be introduced to confirm the views of this section. How natural is the following incident! And how agreeable, therefore, to sound philosophy!—"When I was a little child, (said a religious man,) my mother used to bid me kneel beside her, and place her hand upon my head, while she prayed. Ere I was old enough to know her worth, she died, and I was

left much to my own guidance. Like others, I was inclined to evil passions, but often felt myself checked, and as it were drawn back by the soft hand upon my head. When I was a young man, I travelled in foreign lands, and was exposed to many temptations, but when I would have yielded, *that same hand was upon my head*, and I was saved. I seemed to feel its pressure, as in days of my happy infancy, and sometimes there came with it a voice in my heart, a voice that must be obeyed ; Oh, do not this wickedness, my son, nor sin against thy God."

§. 492. Of education for particular arts or professions.

When men first flowed together into societies, they justly anticipated, that the wants of one would be supplied by the labours of another. As all could not devote themselves to one calling, different pursuits were chosen by different individuals. In making their choice, they were influenced by a variety of circumstances ; by the wants of the community, by the wishes of their associates, or by their own predilections ; and hence we find the whole community divided into arts, or professions.

In prescribing a course of study, regard should be had to the calling, which the person has in view ; and it should be suited, as much as possible, to promote the objects of that calling. It would be absurd, therefore, for a youth, intended for some mechanic art, to spend any length of time in the acquisition of languages, which might be very proper and important in a merchant, lawyer, or theologian.—But then we would not have such an one exclusively limited to those sciences, which have an immediate relation to his business in life. Let such sciences have a great share of his attention, but not all.—Mechanics should remember, that they are men, as well as artisans ; and while they must give up much to their work-shops, they owe not a little to their friends, to their families, and to society. If they are disposed to, they can save many fragments of time from their appropriate callings, which may be profitably employed in disciplining all the

mental powers, and in the improvement of the social and religious affections.

§. 493. Formation of intellectual habits.

The term, HABIT, may be applied either to bodily or mental operations, and expresses that readiness or facility, which is found to be the result of frequent practice.

By practice, the limbs of the body may be strengthened, and may be brought to perform a variety of admirable motions. Rope-dancers, and the performers of the circus exhibit feats, which would seem incredible, were we not led to expect almost any thing from the formation of habits. The results of intellectual habits are not less striking than those of the body ; the mind can be raised up to its highest excellence only by repeated actions. Many traits, such as a turn for punning, for diverting stories, for imaginary creations, for close reasoning, which are thought to be natural, are caused wholly by a repetition of the same acts.

This great law of the mind, that it is susceptible of habits, or that it acquires a facility of doing merely by the repetition of doing, is of no small practical value in the conduct of education.—If the student would become a good writer, he must form a habit ; that is, he must acquire a command of words, and a ready perception of what is beautiful or deformed in the combinations of thought and of language, by frequent practice. If he would become a ready speaker or reasoner, he must use himself to the task of connecting together his thoughts in arguments, and of expressing them in unpremeditated diction. If he would possess the power of framing at will ideal creations, it can only be done by a frequent exercise of the imagination.

You may give to the pupil all the rules in the world ; you may succeed in making him fully understand the propriety of them ; and they will utterly avail nothing, unless he shall set his own mind at work, and not only go through with a series of mental operations, but continue to them, until a facility is acquired.—Here is the secret of excellence ; in frequent, and consequently labo-

rious repetition. It is in ~~this~~ way, that good poets, good orators, mathematicians, painters, &c. are formed. In multitudes of instances a want of excellence is to be ascribed, ~~not so much~~ to any defect of nature, as to a repugnance to the formation of intellectual habits. And this is much the same as to say, that in all such cases the true occasion of mental inferiority is indolence.

§. 494. Of a thorough examination of subjects.

There is great difference between a superficial, and a thorough education ; between a mere smattering, and a sound knowledge of things. Owing partly to laziness, and partly to the vanity of appearing to know every thing, multitudes dissipate their time in skipping from one sort of knowledge to another, and in forming a slight acquaintance with all, without a full understanding of any. It is thought by many, that this is particularly the vice of the present times ; and that there has been a diminution of laborious and thorough scholarship, in proportion as books have multiplied, and there has been a wider dissemination of knowledge among all classes.—One part of education is the storing of the mind with new ideas ; another, and not a less important one, is the giving to all the mental powers a suitable discipline ; exercising those that are strong ; strengthening those powers which are weak ; maintaining among all of them a suitable balance. A thorough examination of subjects is an education, or training up of the mind, in both these respects. It furnishes it with that species of knowledge, which is most valuable, because it is not mixed up with errors ; and, moreover, gives a strength and consistency to the whole structure of the intellect. These facts are highly worthy of being regarded in the conduct of the understanding.

The direction, which we would deduce from them, is, that the student be made to go to the foundation, the ultimate principles of every subject. Almost every topic, which is worthy of being examined, has its difficulties. The mind, when unaccustomed to patient labour, discovers a disposition to fly off, and not to meet them. This feel-

ing must not be yielded to; but however reluctant, the mind should be again and again brought up to the attack, until the difficulties be overcome. It is not to be supposed from this, that the student's efforts are to be limited to one department of science exclusively; it is merely meant, that he ought not to be permitted to go from one department of knowledge to another or from one subject to another, without thoroughly understanding, without going to the bottom of them.

This practice once adopted will become in the end easy and delightful; the love of truth will be strengthened, and become a mighty principle; the mind will approach difficulties with greater firmness and readiness; and toil itself will no longer be a source of uneasiness. .

§. 495. Of a command of the attention.

Those, who are required to follow the directions above given as to a thorough examination of subjects, will sometimes complain, that they find a great obstacle in their inability to fix their attention. They are not wanting in ability to comprehend, but find it difficult to retain the mind in one position so long, as to enable them to connect together all the parts of a subject, and duly estimate their various bearings. When this intellectual defect exists, it becomes a new reason for that thorough examination of subjects, which has been above recommended. It has probably been caused by a neglect of such strictness of examination, and by a too rapid and careless transition from one subject to another.—ATTENTION expresses the state of the mind, when it is steadily directed for some time, whether longer or shorter, to some object of sense or intellect, exclusive of other objects. All other objects are shut out; and when this exclusion of every thing else continues for some time, the attention is said to be intense.—It is well known, that such an exclusive direction of the mind cannot exist for any long period, without being accompanied with a feeling of desire or interest. In the greatest intellectual exertions, not the mere powers of judging, of abstracting, and of reasoning, are concerned;

there will also be a species of excitement of the feelings. And it will be found, that no feeling will effectually confine the minds of men in scientific pursuits, but a love of the truth.

Mr. Locke thought, that the person who should find out a remedy for the wandering of thoughts, would do great service to the studious and contemplative part of mankind. We know of no other remedy, than the one just mentioned, A LOVE OF THE TRUTH, a desire to know the nature and relations of things, merely for the sake of knowledge. It is true, that a conviction of duty will do much; ambition and interest may possibly do more; but when the mind is led to deep investigations by these views merely, it is a tiresome process, and after all is ineffectual. Nothing but a love of the truth for its own sake will permanently keep off the intrusions of foreign thoughts, and secure a certainty of success. The excellency, therefore, of knowledge, considered merely as suited to the intellectual nature of man, and as indicative of the character of that Being, who is the true source of all knowledge and the fashioner of all intellect, cannot be too frequently impressed.

The person, who is capable of strictly fixing his attention, will have a great advantage over others. Of two persons, who seem naturally to have equal parts, the one, who possesses this quality, will greatly excel. So that it is hardly too much to say, that it may become a sort of substitute for genius itself.

§. 496. Physical education or the regard to be had to the body.

Although education, as the term is commonly employed, has particular reference to the growth and expansion of the intellectual powers, the objects, at which it aims, cannot be fully secured without attention to the body. It is important, that the physical system should be sustained in force and activity. And where this precaution is neglected, where the bodily constitution is permitted to contract diseases, or rapidly to wear itself out from mere indolence, the objects of education are not only not secured,



but defeated. Life is shortened; the mind becomes inert; and oftentimes is irrecoverably prostrated.

Laying, therefore, out of view all other considerations, it seems of great consequence, that attention should be given to the growth and discipline of the physical powers, as a mere auxiliary to the bringing out, and disciplining of the mind.

497. Of social intercourse as a means of improvement.

It can hardly be expected of a professed scholar, who must spend very many hours in solitary retirement, that he will appear to as much advantage, as one, who lives continually in polite society. But the evil effects on his address and manners might be overlooked, were it not, that an awkwardness and singularity may be impressed upon the mind from the same cause. The feelings, the opinions, and the taste of persons, who have mingled but little in society, differ in many respects from those of the mass of mankind around them.—To meet, therefore, with others at suitable times, to enter into conversation and to compare opinions with them in argument, may be recommended, as a part of intellectual culture. In this way, new light may be thrown on many subjects; the faculties acquire a degree of readiness and vivacity, which will turn to good account, when they are pressed by sudden emergencies; odd and singular notions will be extirpated.

But if this direction be important to professed scholars, who are justly expected to remain much with their books, it is still more applicable to those, who go through a course of education, merely to prepare themselves for the world, and that they may the better discharge the duties of a man and a citizen among their fellows.

§. 498. Of the education suitable to a citizen.

There are some parts of education, which can be less safely omitted, than others; and particularly that, which regards man as having certain social and civil rights, or as a citizen. In all legitimate governments, monarchical as well as republican, the will of the people is law; they are

the source of all rightful authority, and the seat of judgment, to which it must render up its account.—Hence there is a political importance attached to every individual; not merely to the learned civilian, but to every farmer, mechanic, day-labourer. They may at times be concerned directly, and at the election of their rulers are always concerned indirectly, in the management of the affairs of the whole nation; in the enactment of commercial regulations, in the adjustment of boundaries, in the formation of treaties.

Every man should be taught from his childhood up, whatever may be his calling, or his standing in life, that he is a sharer in these things, and that he has not only the unalienable rights, but the unalienable duties of a citizen. These ideas give to man a new character; they elevate him from his degradation; throwing the mind open to grand views, giving breadth and comprehension to the feelings, and honourable sentiments. We do not undertake to state in what way, or by the aid of what treatises, this part of education is to be conducted; but only that an undue neglect of it is an unwarrantable contempt of the calls of the age, and a violation of the demands of human nature.

§. 499. Of arithmetic, geography, mathematics, &c.

In the remarks, that have hitherto been made, we have taken precautions against the admission of early prejudices. Rules have been given with reference to the institution of a salutary mental discipline, with such remarks on the consideration of man, as a moral being and a member of society, as seemed to have a bearing on this important subject. We now suppose, that the mental powers of our pupil have become in some degree expanded, and in good exercise; and there are spread before him many departments, which present claims on his attention of greater or less urgency. Something will be said on the study of languages in the next section; a few remarks on some other departments of study will be made here.

**ARITHMETIC.**—This branch of study presents claims to attention. The difficulties, which are to be met with in this pursuit, are generally not greater, than can be overcome by the minds of young persons. It affords a good exercise to the reasoning powers, and helps to form habits of precision, arrangement, and classification. In cases where no foreign language is studied, we think of no department of knowledge, which affords a better discipline to the young mind. Very much, however, depends upon the manner, in which it is taught.

**GEOGRAPHY.**—This science may also be studied at an early period. It interests curiosity; gives employment to the memory, and is a fruitful source of new ideas. Peculiarities in the climates of different countries, traits in the character of the people, and striking curiosities naturally fall within the limits of this science. It is probably not so much the fault of the science as of those, who teach it, that with too many pupils the knowledge, which they get, is a mere record of names.—At a somewhat later period, some departments of natural history may be attended to. Treatises on plants and animals are found to possess a great interest for the young mind; and the information, which can be obtained on such subjects, is not less valuable than interesting.

**MATHEMATICS.**—In a course of liberal education, mathematical studies deservedly hold a distinguished rank. Many have thought, that if we would enjoy the use of our mental powers in all their perfection, we must devote much time to sciences, admitting of demonstration. Such sciences enable the mind to conceive with clearness, by forming a habit of distinguishing one idea from another; they quicken the susceptibility of judgment, and operate as a wholesome check on flights of imagination.—Allowing to mathematics the credit, to which it is entitled, it is but just to remark, that in one respect its influence is less favourable. Persons, whose minds are exclusively trained up to demonstrative reasoning, are liable to be perplexed and at a loss on subjects, which are not susceptible of demonstration. Their minds have been so long guided by

the evidence of intuition, that when left to the helps of moral evidence merely, to circumstances and testimony, they are perplexed and uncertain to a degree, which appears surprising to others, who have subjected themselves to a different sort of discipline. (See §. 297.)—It is a circumstance much in favour of mathematical studies, that they are subservient to the pursuit of most of the other sciences; particularly of the different branches of natural philosophy.

**HISTORY.**—At a later period than the studies, which have been mentioned, comes that of history. A slight acquaintance may have been previously formed with the annals of one's own country, and perhaps something more. But a valuable knowledge of history implies much more than this. No one can have such an acquaintance with history as is desirable, without first informing himself of the characteristic properties of human nature. He must have studied the mind of man; the intellectual laws, to which he is subject; the motives, which influence his conduct; the passions, which agitate him. A knowledge of the doctrine of human rights, and of the principles of national policy and intercourse are also necessary. History, when studied under these advantages, possesses the highest interest and importance.

#### §. 500. Of the study of languages.

The study of languages, more particularly of the Greek and Latin, has long been made a part of education. The reasons, which are commonly given for occupying a considerable portion of time in this way, are chiefly these.

(1) Much information is locked up in these languages. The original Greek and Roman literature is of itself highly valuable; their poets, historians, and orators, are worthy of being compared with those of any age or nation. In addition to this, vast numbers of literary and other treatises have been written in the Latin language in later periods, particularly on the readings and interpretations of ancient authors, and on obscure and difficult points of histo-

ry. A person ignorant of that language is shut out from the greater part of these important documents.

(2) The intercourse of the world has been so much increased in consequence of the spread of knowledge and the facilities of commerce, that an acquaintance with some of the modern languages, particularly the Spanish, Italian, and French, is considered highly desirable. An entire ignorance of all modern languages is thought to imply a very defective education. But the languages, which have been mentioned, together with the Portuguese, have their origin in great part from the Latin; and can be more easily and perfectly learnt by previously giving some attention to the parent dialect, than by attempting them without it.

(3) No one, who speaks the English language, can deny the importance of a thorough knowledge of it. It embodies, and retains the vast wisdom of many good and learned men; and is the medium, by which the thoughts and feelings of our own generation and of our own hearts are to be communicated. But in the knowledge of this language, the student will find himself assisted by an acquaintance with the Latin; inasmuch as about one half of the words in the English language are derived from that source.

The Greek, which is a source of many English words, has a similar argument in its favour; and the additional circumstance of being the original language of the New Testament.

(4) The study of languages answers a good purpose, as a sort of basis of education. During the period from eight to eleven years of age, the intellect may be supposed to be developing itself under the mere guidance of nature. It is a great point in education to aid this developement, to keep the mental powers in exercise, and to promote their growth. This object is known to be secured by the study of the languages in a high degree; certainly much more than by the study of ethics, history, mineralogy, chemistry, &c.; or even the more appropriate study of arithmetic. It is thought, that the object cannot be secured, in so high a degree, by any other course of study whatever, which can be pointed out.

(5) It has also been strongly contended, that an acquaintance with any language is a valuable acquisition, because it opens up new views of mental character. The language of every nation is modified by the exigencies of the people, who speak it; and by individual and national traits. It embodies their emotions, customs, prejudices, domestic and political history.—No man, therefore, can make himself fully acquainted with a new language, without having more correct and broader views of the development of the mind, of the progress of men, as they rise from barbarism to refinement, and of human nature in general. And these advantages can be secured by the study of the Greek and Latin languages, no less than by others.

In view of this subject, all that remains to be said here, is briefly this;—There can be no objection to changes in existing systems of education, whenever good reasons can be shown for making them, whether they concern the study of languages, or any other part of education. On the contrary, systems of instruction ought to be examined into, and all improvements, of which they are susceptible, should be made. The above statements, however, in favour of the study of the classic languages, show, that the advocates for retaining them, as a part of the methods of liberal education, do not give this preference to them without some good grounds.

§. 501. Of education in connection with the progress of science.

The progress of education ought to keep pace with the progress of the sciences; and when the sciences are advanced, and are spreading abroad their light, the mass of intellect, the minds of the great body of the people, ought not to be kept back in the twilight of former ages. It has been remarked and not without reason, that a young man, on completing his studies at a modern seminary, may have made himself acquainted with those principles of mathematics, in the acquisition of which the profound Newton spent his life. A similar remark may be made in respect to all the departments of knowledge. The vast multitude of facts in physics have been reduced to order,

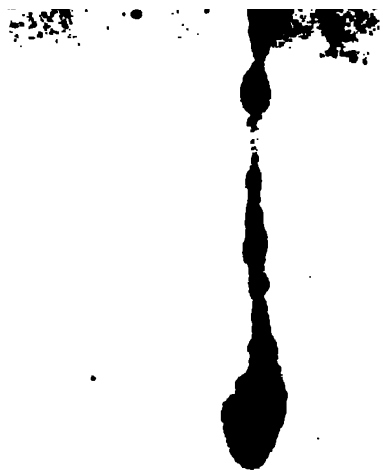
and all the sciences, founded on observation and experience, have been compressed, as it were, into a smaller space. What was the extent, the ultimate boundary of knowledge in one age, and was reached only by the most powerful minds, becomes in the succeeding age elementary, and makes a part of the rudiments of education.

In conducting, therefore, the process of education, it is of less consequence to inquire what was believed, and what was known in the sciences in former ages, than to inquire what is believed and known at the present moment. There are thousands of treatises, which were once valuable and entitled their authors to great credit; but have now lost their interest, and have no claims to be put into the hands of the student. It is true, they are the documents, out of which a history of the progress of the human mind is to be formed, but they are out of place in those systems of practical education, the object which is to enlighten the minds of the great body of the people.

END.

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